



THE HARLAN ELLISON COLLECTION

*H*ARLAN ELLISON'S
MOVIE



Harlan Ellison's Movie

Harlan Ellison



**FRIEND, AMANUENSIS, AGENT.
TO THE MEMORY OF
BOB.
ROBERT P. MILLS
ABSENT. BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.**

Contents

Interim Memo

**INSTALLMENTS 11 THROUGH 20 | 11 JANUARY THROUGH 15
MARCH 1973**

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Interim Memo

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The introductory remarks that precede the screenplay tell everything that needs to be told. Save for the facts that the film never got made; that 20th Century-Fox (in the person of an unnamed executive) actually threw the script across an office, at Marvin Schwartz's head, attempting to convey displeasure at the content of said screenplay; that every one of the *many* studios and production companies that saw the script flew into a choleric rage; and that dear Marvin Schwartz, who was a very good guy indeed, and a terrific producer indeed, left the film business within five years of my writing *Harlan Ellison's Movie*, never made another movie, and was last heard of (so help me) living in the North Woods. He dropped out totally, and never came back. Sometimes I think I was responsible. Sometimes I think, with this great power, that I could have saved Eleanor Roosevelt.

INSTALLMENTS 11 THROUGH 20 | 11 JANUARY THROUGH 15 MARCH 1973

HARLAN ELLISON'S MOVIE

This week, we begin a mad adventure. How many weeks it will take to run its course I don't know. Past experience with *The Glass Teat* advises me you'll enjoy the trip, but a few words of explanation can't hurt.

Twice during the two and a half year run of *The Glass Teat* I used scripts I had written for television as segments of the column. The first was a treatment—a synopsis—of a proposed script for *The Name of the Game*. It was never put into script, but it turned out to be a good piece of craft information not only for those who had aspirations as tv writers, but for those who had very little understanding of the steps through which a scenarist goes in preparing a typical tv segment.

The second such offering was a complete publication of the original teleplay of my segment of *The Young Lawyers*. I ran it as a sort of protection of my reputation. I knew it would get butchered in the studio hopper, and I wanted those who knew and enjoyed my work to see what it looked like before the assassins got at it. It ran in five or six installments, an act at a time, and it was followed by an installment of the column discussing how it looked when it was aired. Readers advised me they'd saved the installments and had compared them with the show as they watched it over ABC. There was a universal moan of horror from them pursuant to what they'd read as opposed to what they'd seen.

But again, it was enlightening for those who wanted to write tv scripts and apparently fascinating to those who had no idea a writer puts all those clever words in the actors' mouths, not to mention many of those clever angles put into the director's camera.

This time, I offer a full motion-picture script. It will take more than six installments to run it, because it's a long movie; but I think you will find it socially redeeming and intellectually challenging. Also maybe funny. And look on the bright side: I won't miss any deadlines!

The history of the film is simple: I was approached by Marvin Schwartz (the producer of *The War Wagon*, *100 Rifles*, *Hard Contract*, the sensational television movie *Tribes*, and two forthcoming films, *Welcome Home*, *Soldier Boys* and *Kid Blue*), who proposed that I write a film I'd always wanted to write. Marvin suggested a basic theme, a

dropout who inherits his father's bank, and then he turned me loose. I wrote the film at 20th Century-Fox, though it was a personal project of Marvin's, and I must state categorically that it was the happiest liaison with a producer I've ever had. Marvin was quick and intuitive and had a sure story-sense that never failed. He was hip enough to leave me to my own devices most of the time and the one time he offered a suggestion for a possible story-line it was to ask me if there had ever been a scene I'd wanted to write into a film, a scene that no one had ever let me use. I began grinning and said yes, there had been one scene I'd written into three different films that had been excised early on because the producers had deemed it too berserk for human consumption. Marvin urged me to use it in our movie. And I did. After the final installment of the script runs in these pages, I'll answer any questions you readers may have, and I'll tell you which of the many scenes in the film is the one Marvin insisted I write. You may make wild guesses if you choose.

One further word. This film has not been produced. At the time it was written, three years ago, it was fresh and of-the-times. Then the studios, who had ripped off the subculture shamelessly in their attempts to commercialize the *Easy Rider* ambience, who had lost their shirts on such horrors as *The Strawberry Statement*, *R.P.M.*, *The Revolutionary* and other dumb, arteriosclerotic hypes, decided "relevance" wasn't relevant any longer, and they abandoned the culture of the streets, to the mutual relief of the street people and the banks that financed the films. There are sections of this film, therefore, that may seem dated. They would have to be redone if the film were to be produced today. But in the main, I would alter this script very little. Even the mad thought that it would take something like eight million dollars to produce it doesn't scare me. New film and videotape techniques make this movie produceable at a reasonable budget.

If anyone cares, I think it's one of the three best things I ever wrote for the visual media. So personal a script is it, that I titled it accordingly; and though Marvin—flabbergasted at my arrogance—at first balked at my title, when the chips were down he threw up his hands and agreed that what I had produced from my rancid cesspool of a mind was so ellisonian in nature, there could logically be no other title for the film than

HARLAN ELLISON'S MOVIE

FADE IN:

1 LIMBO SHOT—DIMINISHING PERSPECTIVE

Darkness all the way to infinity, save that the floor of limbo is a carpet in the design of the American flag. It is made of grass. It stretches, starred and striped, to the farthest point we can see. CAMERA HIGH on the grass carpet, but as it begins to DESCEND we begin to HEAR the SOUND of very upbeat mojo ROCK MUSIC in the b.g., at first FAINTLY, but as CAMERA COMES DOWN TO FLOOR LEVEL we realize something is running toward us on the dichondra-height grass flag, and as CAMERA LEVELS OFF a few inches above the floor and HOLDS, the rock music builds and builds and builds as whatever-it-is running toward us becomes larger and larger and larger.

CAMERA HOLDS as the thing running toward us becomes a MOUSE, plunging hell-for-leather TOWARD CAMERA. HOLD the mouse as he rushes into the CAMERA and BLACK TO

WHIP-PAN:

2 REVERSE ANGLE—FOLLOWING MOUSE

as we see him heading toward an enormous COMPUTER that stretches from one side of the frame to the other in diminishing perspective, from one end of infinity to the other.

CAMERA hangs in there, ZOOMING IN with the mouse as he scampers across the flag carpet, right up to the big brain, and vanishes into a conduit aperture. ZOOMING IN CLOSE on hole—

We HEAR the ghastly sound of machinery chewing on itself. Fingernails down blackboards. Hacking coughs in lanai apartments. Animals being slaughtered. Cars piling up on freeways. Bells ringing. Horns. The variegated sounds of bedlam. CAMERA ZOOMS OUT to FULL SHOT of computer.

3 NEON SCREEN ON COMPUTER

One of those blinking-bulb jobbies like the one on Times Square that advertises (yecchhh!) Life magazine. And we start to see coocoo things appearing there. A black-power fist, a DAR symbol, a hammer-&-sickle, a nude girl, Che Guevara, a flower, two fingers in peace, the zigzag man from the pot posters, a peace symbol, a skull and crossbones, Mickey Mouse. Then the NOISE of the COMPUTER going bananas rises sharply and we do:

4 40 FRAMES A SECOND—THE COMPUTER

as it destroys itself. Cogs, wheels, tubes, plastic cases, Memorex tape, rivets, conduits, printed circuits, shards of glass and plastic and metal go cascading up and out in a wild shower as the ROCK MUSIC SWELLS OVER.

5 CLOSE ON COMPUTER

as the mouse emerges from a rubber nipple opening, with a satisfying pop! CAMERA ZOOMS OUT as mouse runs away from computer, toward CAMERA. Computer in b.g. now a flaming ruin, with the neon screen alternating between obscene remarks and right-wing jingoism.

6 REVERSE ANGLE—PERSPECTIVE

as mouse rushes back the way he came. CAMERA FOLLOWS the mouse till he vanishes into the darkness and we

HOLD BLACK FRAME FOR:
MAIN TITLES OVER

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

7 BLACK FRAME

Through blackness we see some square white objects ranked at the top and the bottom of the frame. As CAMERA MOVES IN SMOOTHLY on these white squares (they look like Chiclets placed side by side) we begin to HEAR the SOUNDS of a BANK O.S.

SOUNDS of adding machine, teller counting out cash in a monotone, people walking across tiled floors—that very special sound you get only in a bank or library.

CAMERA KEEPS MOVING till we realize we are INSIDE A MOUTH and those white squares are TEETH. And the white squares part and we see out through the mouth to a fat little female DEPOSITOR in an antimacassar hat and bifocals and ruffled dress, making her deposit in pennies. Counting them out one after another, slowly and methodically, as CAMERA COMES OUT OF MOUTH.

8 INT. BANK—DAY

CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE SLOWLY IN CIRCLE from the mouth, showing us the Depositor—a typical little old lady in tennis shoes—and her maddening method of depositing ten dollars, the next wicket in the line with something equally as boring going on, the guard half dozing against a pillar in the lobby, quiet mumble of voices; in all, a very great drag. CAMERA COMES AROUND to show us whose POV we have been experiencing, out of whose mouth we have emerged.

9 CHRIS STOPA

He is young, with clean-cut features, wide innocent eyes, wearing a dark suit and white shirt and tie. Very straight, very square. He's watching the little old lady counting her pennies.

DEPOSITOR

Three hundred seventy-four...three hundred seventy-five...three hundred seventy-six...

CAMERA COMES IN CLOSE ON CHRIS'S EYES

as ominous, very theatrical music strikes warning notes and we PULL BACK from his eyes to see we have

CUT TO:

10 EXT. WESTERN STREET—DAY

Blood-lust-crazed townsfolk line both sides of the street as Chris and another COWBOY in authentic 1888 gear walk toward each other for a shoot-out. They walk slowly, and Chris watches the other Cowboy with narrowed eyes from under the brim of his Stetson.

11 INTERCUT—THE CROWD

A lot of little old lady depositors and their male counterparts. All of them salivating for blood, waiting for the two cowboys to shoot each other.

12 ANGLE

As Chris and the other Cowboy near each other, they look at the crowd, and suddenly draw. Except, at the last instant they each turn toward opposite sides of the street and begin SHOOTING THE CROWD. As the little old ladies and men fall, each one produces the SOUND of a cash register ringing, and OVER the cash register and shots we HEAR:

13 INT. BANK—PAST DEPOSITOR TO CHRIS

DEPOSITOR

Three hundred and seventy-seven...three hundred and seventy-eight...

As he reaches the point of lunacy. He grabs up huge fistfuls of money and flings them into the air, all over the place, shouting incoherently at the top of his lungs.

Then he leaps up onto the counter, begins making ape sounds, pounds his chest like Tarzan and we

14 INTERCUT

a scene from Alexander Korda's 1939 color film "The Thief of Bagdad," in which a giant black spider descends on Sabu, who is hanging onto the web with his sword.

15 BACK TO SCENE

as Chris tears off his tie and jacket, throws them onto the floor, bounds down, and rushes out of the bank as CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM.

When he is gone, and after the bedlam has settled down, CAMERA PANS SLOWLY BACK to his wicket as we HEAR OVER:

DEPOSITOR

Four hundred and forty...four hundred and forty-one...

And CAMERA COMES IN past the little old lady Depositor, to EXTREME CLOSEUP on her flowered dress, till the flowers blur and we

BLUR MATCH-CUT TO:

16 EXT. FLOWER-FIELD & LAKE—DAY

AS CAMERA UNBLURS we are in a real field of flowers, preferably daisies. CAMERA ANGLE TILTS UP and RISES OUT OF FLOWERS to show us the field rushing down to the shore of a beautiful lake in the b.g. Moored to the shore is a large and lovely HOUSEBOAT painted with a million flowers as pretty in their day-glo colors as the daisy field is in its own reality. CAMERA ZOOMS IN SLOWLY on the houseboat as we HEAR IN VOICE OVER:

ACHMED

Captain Marvel was, in reality, Billy Batson, boy newscaster of radio station W-H-I-Z...and to change into Captain Marvel he had to say the magic word Shazam which stood for the following: S was for Solomon—wisdom; H was for Hercules—strength; A, Atlas, stamina; Z, Zeus, power; A, Achilles, courage; and M, Mercury, speed...

While this DIALOGUE CONTINUES OVER, in a very gentle, matter-of-fact manner, we

SLOWLY LAP-DISSOLVE THRU TO:

17 SERIES OF FREEZE-FRAMES

thru

18 all of the same scene: the flower-painted houseboat, sitting at the edge of daisies and blue water and sunshine. Each SHOT that DISSOLVES THRU is a TIGHTER CLOSEUP till we

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

19 INT. MAIN SALON OF HOUSEBOAT—DAY

CLOSE ON BARE BACKSIDE of a young boy, perhaps four years old. CAMERA PULLS BACK to show us he is one of a group of ten little kids, both girls and boys, all naked, in a group. They are being “schooled” by ACHMED, a barrel-chested, bearded, wild-haired black man of early thirties, very kind and obviously holding the kids enchanted. ANGLE WIDENS to show us the kids are being used as models for a wood sculpture.

CAMERA MOVES AROUND kids and Achmed and HOLDS the enormous wood sculpture of the naked children—very Henry Moore—as the sculptor carves out the features of the backside on which this shot opened. CAMERA COMES IN on the sculptor and we SEE it is Chris Stopa, now wearing a mustache, a sawdust-coated Mexican wedding shirt, thong sandals and Levi cutaways. He is intently chiseling out the child’s figure on the great wood sculpture block.

CAMERA CONTINUES MOVING around the houseboat, showing us the specifics of a very nice commune. Quiet, clean people, involved in doing what needs to be done, and deriving enormous pleasure from it. Three girls cooking in giant pots, another woman with a loom, a man writing in a book at a small nightstand, and so on. CAMERA COMES

BACK to Chris, who is smiling as he carves.

20 ANGLE PAST CHRIS

through the open doors of the main salon; these are folding doors opened to make one entire side of the houseboat wide to the day. Outside, we can see a man coming across the field of daisies. He is only a dark speck at first, but he grows larger as we HOLD ON CHRIS (out-of-focus) and watch him come toward the houseboat. Through all of this, Achmed continues telling the kids about Capt. Marvel. Finally, the man comes up the gangway—as seen through the open doors past Chris—and steps in.

21 PAST NAKED CHILD TO MAN

As the little boy turns his head to stare at the man, the CAMERA FOLLOWS HIS POV. The man is slim, tall, dressed in a dark pin-striped business suit, double-breasted, wearing a homburg and carrying an attaché case which is obviously filled with something, for it hangs heavily at the end of his arm. The man stands there, squinting for a moment.

MR. KARPIS

Mr. Christopher Stopa?

22 WIDER ANGLE

Everyone turns to stare at the man. He looks uncomfortable. But everyone stops doing what he is doing, and stares. That is, everyone but Chris, who continues carving carefully.

The man looks around, then removes his homburg.

MR. KARPIS

Mr. Stopa.

He is looking directly at Chris now.

23 CLOSE ON CHRIS

as he accepts the fact that he can't dodge this man, whoever he may be. He wipes wood-chips from his face with his sleeve, then slowly turns as CAMERA RE-FOCUSES TO SHOW THE MAN PAST CHRIS.

MR. KARPIS

My name is Karpis, Mr. Stopa. I've been sent to inform you your father died of a coronary thrombosis ten days ago. I'm very sorry.

Chris stiffens, then slowly turns back to the sculpture. His eyes are moist, but he's toughened against crying over it. He starts to lift the wood chisel again.

MR. KARPIS

I've also been sent to inform you he left sole and complete control of the bank to you, without stipulation.

Now Chris begins to cry, as we:

CUT TO:

24 INT. MAIN SALON OF HOUSEBOAT—NIGHT

CLOSE ON SHADOW SHOW of duck flapping wings. CAMERA PULLS BACK to show eight or ten adults sitting around a fire in a central fireplace with a Swedish firestack that goes up through the roof of the boat. They are all just smoking pot and cooling it. One of the girls is making pleasant runs and sounds on a kalimba (finger-piano). One of the guys is making the shadow pictures on a wall of the houseboat with his fingers. There are little warm nests of children in pillows and sleeping bags, zonked out here and there. Everything is peaceful. CAMERA PANS SLOWLY ACROSS FACES, HOLDS, MOVES ON.

DONNIE

You going to do it, Chris?

Chris is slumped down, on one elbow, watching the flames that light his face. The joint is passed to him and he takes a toke, passes it on.

CHRIS (absently)

Maybe I was fated to be a banker.

LAURIE

You're a Capricorn, man.

CHRIS (still stares at flames, smiles)

So're Nixon, Goldwater and Howard Hughes. You'd think I'd've built up enough good karma to beat the rap.

NORMAN (musingly)

I don't know. Owning a bank can be a very heavy trip. Think of all the good things you could do.

CAMERA MOVES IN on Chris. He doesn't answer. He just thinks and the flames dance as we

CUT TO:

25 EXT. BULLDOZED AREA—DAY

CHRIS is standing with a HOUSING CONTRACTOR talking. The area is a heavily bulldozed section, set amid among watershed land. It's as if a lunatic had taken a giant hand and scarred the earth, tearing out trees and entire hillsides, leaving only angry loam.

CONTRACTOR

We plan to level and terrace this entire section, and then take over all this watershed. Put up 13,000 middle-income houses.

CHRIS

Ticky-tacky.

CONTRACTOR

I beg your pardon?

CHRIS

Little boxes.

CONTRACTOR (nervous)

All we need is for you and the bank to okay the loan.

CHRIS

What happens to the raccoons?

CONTRACTOR

The what...?

CHRIS

You're a creep, man. A spoiler. A goddam spoiler. Kill off the land, drive out the animals, let the hillside wash into the valley in the rainy season.

CONTRACTOR

But...

CHRIS

Forget the loan.

(beat)

Go try Nabisco. They like putting money in cracker boxes.

CUT TO:

26 CHRIS SEATED ON THE PODIUM

at a mayoralty rally. Also on the podium is a lectern and chairs occupied by crooked-looking politicians. Big posters say RE-ELECT JOE CARPY YOUR MAYOR. CARPY is behind the lectern.

CARPY

And now...a word from one of my staunchest supporters...Mr. Christopher Stopa of the Stopa Bank.

Chris rises and goes to lectern amid applause. TV cameras are on him.

CHRIS

I'm here tonight to say—

(beat)

I'm withdrawing all support from Joe Carpy, the most inept and corrupt public official this city has ever seen. I advise everyone to vote for...

Carpy and his bunch jump Chris as the scene goes dark.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. HOUSEBOAT

As the scene lights up again, Chris is back with the people around the fire.

27 ACROSS FIRE TO CHRIS

The others are watching him now.

DONNIE

I think it's a very nice wood sculpture, Chris.

SANDY

Chris...don't go back.

STUART

They'll break your head, man.

CHRIS (resigned)

Somebody's gotta pay the dues.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE BANK—DAY

at ANKLE LEVEL. A car pulls up to the curb. A door opens and a pair of booted feet emerge. All we can see are the Italian boots and bell-

bottom trousers. The feet walk across the sidewalk and we get an UP-ANGLE SHOT of the bronze plate on the wall that says THE STOPA BANK AND TRUST. The feet pause at the front glass doors, and then they are opened. We HEAR VOICES O.S.

BANK DICK

Good morning, Mr. Stopa.

CHRIS

Good morning, Bernie.

29 INT. BANK—DAY—WITH FEET

as they cross the lobby. VOICES OVER AD-LIB; "Morning, Mr. Stopa."
"Good morning." "Good morning, sir."

The feet pass down past a bench, and we see perhaps a dozen pairs of feet of people sitting on the bench: bare feet, sandaled feet, booted feet, wingtip-cordovan feet, more bare feet.

The booted feet of Chris Stopa climb the carpeted stairs, walk down an aisle past many pairs of secretary legs, all crossed and proffered suggestively. The feet reach a door, open it, and as they disappear inside, and the door is slammed, CAMERA RISES to show the glass panel that reads:

CHRIS STOPA

Pres.

CUT TO:

30 INT. CHRIS'S OFFICE

as he flops into his chair, behind his desk. He is dressed in the height of current fashion, but not bizarre. His clothes are extremely cut, but obviously expensive. He looks like just what he is: a bank president who, if he so chooses, can wear whatever he wants. His secretary, NAN SUTHERLAND, brings in a sheaf of letters to be signed. She is

young, rather attractive, but there is the look of the victim about her. She slaps the papers down and he starts signing.

CHRIS (without looking up)

Turn on the stereo, will you, Nan.

Nan goes over to the wall, pulls down a covering panel and turns on the pre-amp and turntable. She starts the machine and rock music swells—but softly—in the office.

CHRIS

What've we got on this morning?

NAN

Brillo and Jerry from the Ark. Kid named Frog with a dub of some group he's fronting. Penny and her old man from the Leather World. Farmer named Tobul and his wife. And a coupla dozen other numbers.

As he signs the last letter, and flips it onto the completed stack:

CHRIS

Okay, start running 'em in.

NAN

Brillo and Jerry first?

CHRIS

Right.

Nan exits and Chris starts pulling papers out of the desk drawers. The desktop is soon littered. The door opens and in come BRILLO and JERRY, the former black and tall, wearing wasted clothing and an AmerIndian headband around his natural; the latter white and short and gay, but not offensively so.

CHRIS

Hey, c'mon in. I'm trying to find that damned statement you sent me last week.

(beat)

Damn!

(yells)

Hey, Nan! Nan! Yo!

The door pops open and Nan sticks her face in.

CHRIS

Hey, baby, where'd I put—

NAN

Behind you, third drawer of the file rack. Yellow sheets on top.

She vanishes, and the door closes. Brillo and Jerry are amused. Chris turns around, fishes in the file, comes up with what he'd been after.

31 ON CHRIS

as he stares at a financial statement. He indicates chairs to Brillo and Jerry. They sit.

CHRIS

You two are beautiful. Another three months you'll have the loan paid out.

BRILLO

You the beautiful one, baby. Hadn't of been for you, we'd still be scufflin' sellin' posters an' alla that shit on Sunset.

Chris dismisses it with a wave of the hand.

CHRIS

Stop hyping me. You two want something. What is it this time? Want to bust out a wall and buy another shop on the block?

BRILLO

Better'n that. We wanna take over the world.

CHRIS

Right on.

JERRY

What we want to do, Chris, is build a flea market and lease out space to different shops.

Chris sits forward.

32 ON JERRY

as he reaches down beside his chair and brings up a loose-leaf notebook.

JERRY

Look, we worked it all out with our guy, y'know, Teddy, the CPA? He says we can do it for—

As he speaks, his VOICE GOES TO ECHO CHAMBER and what he says REVERBERATES HEAVILY in the room:

JERRY

—EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS OF GLASS BEADS, CHEAP TRINKETS AND WAMPUM.

CHRIS (no echo chamber)

Let me see what you've worked out.

He reaches out to take the notebook as Jerry leans in to hand it to him, and CAMERA COMES IN CLOSE ON NOTEBOOK as we

MATCH-CUT TO:

33 EXT.—DAY—(PROCESS)

Chris's hand pulls back with notebook as CAMERA PULLS BACK and

we see all three of them sitting on the grass in Central Park, with Manhattan behind them. Chris is dressed like Peter Cooper, Brillo and Jerry are dressed like Indians. Chris examines the notebook.

CHRIS

Now what the hell can I do with an island this size?

BRILLO

Y'can always plant it in spinach greens, baby.

JERRY

It's a fine opportunity, Chris. This could all be a bomb crater some day.

BRILLO

Pour concrete all over it, turn it into a big parking lot.

CHRIS

Who'd want to live in a place like this?

JERRY

Millions of people!

CHRIS

No, it's a bummer. All that crap in the air, dead fish in the harbor, my white shirt's dirty already. You'd have to be really crazy to want to live in a pig sty like this.

BRILLO (ominously)

You tryin' to stifle individual initiative, man?

CHRIS

I'm trying to tell you I'm not paying out perfectly good glass beads and cheap trinkets for a piece of real estate that smells as bad as this one.

JERRY

Make us an offer.

CHRIS

No, I don't think—

BRILLO

C'mon, man, make some kind of offer!

CHRIS

Okay. This's my first and last bottom line offer. We'll give you syphilis, smallpox, cowpox, chicken pox and the common cold; we'll slaughter all the buffalo; piss in the rivers regularly and you'll have to throw in Staten Island.

Both Jerry and Brillo shout, as one:

BRILLO/JERRY

You gotchursel a deal!

CUT BACK TO:

34 CHRIS'S OFFICE

Chris closes the notebook and leans back in his chair, puts his feet up on the edge of an open desk drawer.

JERRY

We'd like you to come over and look at the location for the plaza.

CHRIS

Okay. Just make sure you keep a tight rein on the contractors. They'll suck your blood, you don't be careful.

They rise and Chris extends his hand, palm up. First Brillo, then Jerry, slap five with him. They leave, and as they do, Nan comes in with a stack of papers.

35 ANGLE ON CHRIS & NAN

as she comes to the desk, lays the papers down and flips them for his signature. Chris pays attention to the papers, but Nan is looking down at him, with an expression akin to that of a waif with its nose pressed against a candy store window. Chris hands her papers.

CHRIS (without looking up)

Give this to Harry Jackson, give this to Inez, have Pete go over these loan reviews...

(beat)

get me the money-market quotes, and particularly what treasury bills are going for.

NAN

Wall Street Journal quotes it down an eighth—the new interest rate breakdown is there on the bottom.

CHRIS (holding another paper)

Credit this account the sum I've circled and debit our service charge miscellaneous. It was our error, not his.

NAN

The girl called from the rally at the roller derby.

CHRIS

I'll be there as quick as I can.

He signs the last two or three, Nan gathers them up, and he settles back, looks up at her.

CHRIS

Anything else in-basket?

NAN

No, but we've got a problem with Ginger at the number 4 teller's window.

CHRIS

What is it?

NAN

She's wearing see-through blouses again, without a bra.

CHRIS

With a body like that, it isn't a problem; she's just doing her thing, baby.

NAN (wryly)

Yeah? Well, come look at what her "thing" is "doing."

36 WITH CHRIS

as he gets up and follows Nan to the door. She opens door and Chris peeks out.

37 LONG SHOT—LOBBY OF BANK

ON THE TELLERS' WICKETS. There are seven of them, and six are empty of customers. The tellers are applying lipstick, whistling, twiddling their fingers. At the number 4 window, however, a long line of men stretches all the way across the lobby and doubles back on itself. Behind the wicket is GINGER, a very buxom redhead with a tissue paper blouse.

38 ANGLE

NAN

I'll tell her we have to let her go. You know she won't stop.

CHRIS

Well, let me handle it.

He opens the door and goes through.

39 TRAVELING SHOT—WITH CHRIS

as he leaves his office, goes to the divider by the statements department, motions to a girl to press the buzzer that releases the door, pushes open the door and walks down the line behind the tellers. When he gets to Ginger's wicket he waits till she finishes handling a customer's money. The customer lingers. Ginger smiles. The other customers grumble. Before the next customer can move up, Chris steps forward.

40 SHOT FROM END OF LINE TO CHRIS

as he slips a WINDOW CLOSED plate up on the counter.

CHRIS

Please use the other windows.

The line disperses grumpily, filtering itself in to the other six tellers, who leap to work as though suddenly deluged. As the line breaks up CAMERA MOVES IN on the wicket, till we come in CLOSE ON CHRIS AND GINGER

GINGER (sweetly)

Good morning, Mr. Stopa.

CHRIS (trying to avoid looking where all eyes are drawn)

Ginger, we've got a little problem.

GINGER (inhaling)

Yes, sir?

CHRIS

You're going to have to start wearing something a little less impressive...

(he stops; we actually see him have another thought, change his mind, make a new decision)

No, wait a minute, I'll tell you what...come on, close up your window

and come with me.

Ginger closes down her money box and locks it, and follows Chris. As they pass down the line behind the tellers, all nine thousand of those guys watch her every bounce and jiggle. Finally, Chris and Ginger go through the little door and Chris leads her to a window on another side of the bank. The window says NEW ACCOUNTS.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

You work here from now on, Ginger. I think you'll like it better...and just keep dressing the way you are.

He walks away, and as he does, we see half—a—dozen guys already drifting over to the NEW ACCOUNTS WINDOW.

41 CHRIS'S OFFICE

as he comes through the door. Nan has been standing in the doorway, watching. She smiles and shakes her head. With admiration. And something else.

CHRIS

Waste not, want not.

(beat)

What's next?

NAN

The farmer and his wife. A dollar says you forgot.

CHRIS

You're on. His name's...uh...begins with an "R"...Ribble...something like that...

She goes to the door, starts out, sticks her head back in.

NAN

Terrific, boss. That's fifty-six bucks you owe me. His name's Tobul.

She withdraws her head, and as the door closes, Chris sits down and yells:

CHRIS

I said it started with an "R"!

42 ANGLE ON DOOR

as it opens, and Nan enters, announcing, like a ringmaster in a circus:

NAN

Announcing! The farmer, Tobul, and his mizzus.

She steps out of the way and CAMERA COMES AROUND to a DIRECT SHOT ON DOORWAY in which we see a huge reproduction of Grant Wood's "American Gothic" that fills the frame from top to bottom and side to side.

The reproduction is on rollers, and it moves toward us, pushed from behind by someone. As it enters the room, JOE TOBUL and his MIZZUS step out from behind. (Nan slips out unobtrusively and closes the door.) They look nothing like the reproduction. He is short and fat and covered with hair, and she looks like a Pillsbury cake that didn't rise properly. Tobul steps around and shakes Chris's hand.

TOBUL

I tell y'son, I'm ass-deep in boll weevils.

MIZZUS

A-men to that!

CHRIS

Won't you sit down, Mr. and Mrs. Tobul?

TOBUL

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.

They sit down. Chris reaches to a side of his desk and offers them a jelly jar filled with straw. Joe Tobul and the Mizzus each take one and hang it from a corner of their mouth.

MIZZUS

A-men to that!

CHRIS

Terrific. Now, what seems to be your problem, Mr. Tobul?

Tobul waves his arm in a sweeping gesture and the office disappears and we find the furniture and the three of them suddenly sitting in the middle of

MATCH-CUT TO:

43 TOBUL'S FARM—DAY

An ox is yoked to a grain-crushing wheel, walking around and around in a stately circle as it mashes out the mulch. Pigs, chickens, a silo, a little farmhouse, the plow, all the usual junk of a farm, but crammed together the way it's packed on top of each other in one of those puzzle-page pictures of "Find 32 Errors in This Drawing."

TOBUL

They're payin' me not to grow cotton, son. Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

MIZZUS

A-men to that!

CHRIS

The government, you mean.

TOBUL

And the Lord said unto Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole."

CHRIS (to Mizzus)

I know: A-men to that.

(beat)

But what about the boll weevils?

TOBUL

They've run amuck, son. The Federals pay me not to grow the cotton, and I cain't make ends meet. So I grow the mangoes and breadfruit and pomegranates.

(beat)

But the weevils cain't get their cotton, so they been eatin' the fruit... and there's EVIL THINGS HAPPENIN' OUT THERE IN TH' SOUTH FORTY!

44 THE SOUTH FORTY—(STOCK)

It all becomes very gothic, very eerie, very Edgar Allan Poe, very H. P. Lovecraft. THEREMIN MUSIC RISES OVER and the landscape alters as the trees begin to look like gnarled, wizened, twisted cripples. The sky is cadaverously gray, the very earth looks as though the unspeakable elder gods of the nether world will emerge a moment after the sun sets.

CHRIS (uneasily)

Yeah, I see what you mean.

There is the HIDEOUS SOUND of SLURPING and CHOMPING that fills the sky.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

What's that?

TOBUL

Suffer not a witch to live, saith the Lord!

MIZZUS

A-men to that!

CHRIS

Yeah, swell. But what is that?

TOBUL

We call him Franz Kafka. Not a bad sort, all things considered.

He points. Chris turns and CAMERA FOLLOWS HIS POV to show us the bulk of a gigantic 70-foot boll weevil, framed against the sky, eating the farmhouse.

(PROCESS)

TOBUL (CONT'D.)

He musta got tired of eatin' the pomegranates.

CHRIS (undertone)

A-men to that!

They stand and watch for a moment as the boll weevil finishes the house and starts on the silo, belching in a singularly gauche manner.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Mr. Tobul, I'm going to solve your little problem.

MATCH-CUT BACK TO:

45 CHRIS'S OFFICE

Now even the reproduction of "American Gothic" is gone. As is the hay. Just these two miserable-looking little farm types.

CHRIS

Mr. Tobul, I'm going to let my staff figure out a way to wipe off your mortgage, to pay your bills, and let you go back to growing cotton.

(he hits the intercom; into intercom)

Nan, who've I got left from my dad's staff who isn't tied up—to handle a problem?

NAN (FILTER)

Grissom.

CHRIS (smiles at Tobuls)

Send him in.

46 ANOTHER ANGLE IN OFFICE

as they sit a few beats and smile at each other. There is the commotion of movement outside the office and the door is rapped upon.

CHRIS

Come in, Mr. Grissom.

47 INT. CHRIS'S OFFICE

as MR. GRISSOM steps through. He is tall, spare, with glasses—dressed in very conservative Brooks Bros. garb. He enters, stands and says:

GRISSOM

You sent for me, sir?

CHRIS

Hello, Mr. Grissom.

(beat)

Yes, I have a job for you. Rather a complex little problem. This is Mr. Tobul and his wife. I want you to cancel their loan, close out their mortgage and set up a system whereby they can repay us from the profits of their farm.

Grissom perks up. He understands this sort of deal.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

I've a raise in salary waiting for you, depending on how much you're able to cheat and gouge the United States government in behalf of these folks.

GRISSOM

But, sir...that's illegal...

(beat)

isn't it?

CHRIS

Cunning, Mr. Grissom. If you want to climb the ladder of success with the Stopa Bank, I urge you to make cunning your watchword.

MIZZUS

Aaaa-men to that!

And away the Tobuls go. Nan stands staring, nonplused. Mr. Grissom stares after them a beat, then looks back at Chris, not knowing what to do.

Chris smiles, gets up, crosses to Grissom, takes him by the shoulder (for Grissom is really out of it now) and urges him toward the door, past Nan.

CHRIS

Cunning, deceit, lie, cheat, steal...rape, pillage and burn...

GRISSOM

Rape? Pillage? Burn?

Grissom goes through the door as we follow CHRIS. He watches Grissom teeter across the bank in one direction, change to another, then bumble off in a third direction, totally lost. Nan taps Chris on the shoulder.

NAN

Chris, you were supposed to be at that Roll-In half an hour ago. Do you want me to come along?

CHRIS

No, huh-uh. Just call my car, will you? I'll get some stuff on my desk signed and take off.

(beat)

You can take the rest of the day off.

NAN

Oh, I don't have to do that. I don't mind working through. You might come back and want to finish up some things.

Chris has already gone back into his office, is already signing papers. She has followed him. He speaks to her without looking up.

CHRIS

Nan, you've got a kid. Go home and make happy with him. If I have any late work I'll do it myself.

She stares at him for a long moment, and when he obviously isn't going to look up, she goes out. She closes the door. HOLD ON CHRIS as he signs the papers very rapidly, then grabs his jacket and goes to the office door. He opens the door and starts to step out but stops as he hears Nan.

NAN (O.S.)

I'm sorry, honey, but Mrs. Garcia will stay with you and make you dinner. I have to work late. But I'll come in and kiss you goodnight when I come home.

48 ON CHRIS

as he comes through the door. Nan is sitting at her desk with JOEY standing beside her. He is a small, long-haired, very groovy little boy of six or seven. He looks up as Chris comes through the door, and instantly a change comes over both of them.

Chris slumps from the shoulders, his head drawing down into his neck like a hunchback. His face screws up like Quasimodo. He begins to

drag one leg and his hands go out in front of him like claws, all twitching.

Joey draws himself up much straighter and gets a mad gleam in his eyes. He begins drywashing his hands like a mad scientist.

CHRIS (in a lunatic voice)

Master! Master!

JOEY (as Dr. Sivana)

Gorko, you mad beast! Did you find it?

Chris slips to his knees before Joey. Nan tries to stifle a laugh.

CHRIS

Master, don't beat me again with the wet noodles...please, Master, I tried...

JOEY

So you failed once again, eh? I sent you out to find the sacred red ruby of Mazuma...

CHRIS (interrupts, in a real voice)

That's Montezuma.

JOEY (shrugs)

Montezuma! Come on!

Chris nods that he's sorry for interrupting, and slumps back into his hunchbacked Gorko role.

JOEY (CONT'D.)

Just for that, Gorko, you pukey thing, you suffer the rat of Dr. Sivana.

CHRIS (cringing)

No, Master, not that, anything but that.

JOEY

Anything?

CHRIS

Anything!

JOEY

The wet noodles?

CHRIS (in real voice)

Is this a multiple choice?

JOEY

Okay! Just for that, poof, you're a toad.

CHRIS

Rivet!

He starts hopping around the floor. Joey breaks up. Nan looks embarrassed, starts looking to see if customers have spotted these goings-on. Chris is bounding about going "Rivet, Rivet, Rivet," like a frog. Then he stops.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Make a deal with you, bwana.

JOEY

You can't make deals with mad scientists.

CHRIS

How about I give you your Mommy early tonight, no late work?

JOEY

Yeahhhh!

Chris stands up, shakes hands with Joey.

CHRIS

It is a deal, sir.

JOEY (very formal)

Thank you, sir.

NAN

Chris, I can't. I have a mountain of—

He turns and gives her a look she can't ignore.

CHRIS

You're excused. Go home.

He winks at Joey and just moves out across the lobby.

49 WITH CHRIS

As he passes the line of people waiting to see him—which has thinned somewhat—a short kid of perhaps 20 or 21, with lots of hair, shades, free and easy movement, very limber, carrying a record jacket under his arm, and with an elaborate tape recorder swinging from a strap on his shoulder, leaps up and keeps pace with him. Chris looks down, sees the kid, and grins. They go through the palm-slap number as Chris moves toward the front door.

CHRIS

Hey! Frog, man, where the hell you been? I haven't seen you since that bust-up in Topanga.

Frog extends the demonstration record in its plain white sleeve.

FROG

Got a group now. The Elephant's Graveyard.

Now they both push through the front doors of the bank as the bank guard holds one open for them.

BANK DICK (with a W.C. Fields accent)

Your car will be here surreptitiously, sir.

50 EXT. STREET—BANK FRONT—DAY

Chris holds the demo record and nods with pleasure.

FROG

I'd like you to hear it. We need some bread.

Chris hands back the dub as his car pulls up to the curb.

CHRIS

Listen, man, I can't stop to play it now. I'm backing the Roll-In Rally at the Amphitheater...I'm overdue.

Chris opens the door of the car and catches Frog's dejected expression. He stops.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

You got it on the tape?

Frog nods. Chris grabs him by the arm and hustles him into the car. He climbs in beside him in the back seat and the car pulls out into traffic.

51 INT. LIMOUSINE—DAY

moving through traffic. Frog unslings the tape machine. Chris slides the glass panel aside and speaks to the dude driving.

CHRIS

Hey, Soldier. The rally at the Amphitheater.

SOLDIER (who is obviously an ex-pug with cauliflower head) gives him a circle of thumb and forefinger, and Chris slides back the panel. Frog is fiddling with the controls.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

How many?

FROG

Fender, lead, drums, electric organ and vocal.

CHRIS

Rent the equipment?

FROG

An arm and a leg, baby.

And then the MUSIC BEGINS. It is solid, earthy, downhome-sounding stuff with the feel of Creedence Clearwater, Santana, Taj Mahal or Led Zeppelin in it; plays long enough for us to dig we're into something very good, as Chris cocks his head to listen, and suddenly we

INTERCUT TO:

52 LIMBO SHOT—HARLAN ELLISON

that cute little guy, standing there wearing a sweatshirt with the name HARLAN ELLISON on it (for the one or two backward types in the hills who may not know our omniscient author on sight). There is a doorframe holding a closed door beside him. He looks at the CAMERA for a moment, then says:

HARLAN

It's been entirely too long since we've heard George Gershwin's "Concerto in F."

He opens the door.

53 THROUGH DOORWAY—ORCHESTRA—(STOCK)

a full symphony orchestra playing the most memorable minute or two of the Gershwin concerto. Harlan stands holding the door open. Finally he looks back at us in the CAMERA, smiles, and closes the

door.

HARLAN

There. Wasn't that nice?

CUT BACK TO:

54 INT. CAR

and we listen to a little more of the good music. Chris signals Frog to cut it.

CHRIS

Fat sound.

FROG

Yeah...well...you know...we put a lotta time in on it. But we need a loan to get us in shape.

CHRIS

How much you figure you'll need.

FROG

Well, we can always buy used gear and...

CHRIS

How much to do it new?

Frog looks startled, then thinks a moment, holding up a hand for Chris to wait while he works it out. Then he says:

FROG

Twelve grand. Fender bass, lead guitar, electric organ, drums, mikes and four mother amps.

CHRIS

How much output?

FROG

Figure 200 watts each on bass, lead, organ and drums.

CHRIS

That comes to between seven and ten.

FROG

Leaves us two grand to cut demos. If we get three good dubs out of it, we might be able to get a deal out of Atco or Columbia or somebody.

Chris thinks a moment, then shakes his head.

CHRIS

I guess not, Frog.

Frog gets instantly defensive.

FROG

Man, you are just like all the rest. Hold onto that big nickel!

CHRIS (harder)

Wrong, baby. I'm different.

(he taps tape)

This isn't new, Frog. This is other people's sounds. Derivative.

Frog winds up the tape with a whirring sound, and has a very ugly look on his face.

FROG (salty)

Yeah. Tell me all about it, man.

CHRIS

I'll tell you this: go back and find your own sound. This isn't it.

(beat)

Get your thing together, baby, then come ask me again.

The limousine pulls up in front of the Amphitheater and Chris gets out. He leans in and adds:

CHRIS (CONT'D.) (to Soldier)

Hey, take him back to the Strip and go home. I'll cop a ride back from here.

He slams the door with Frog still looking at him angrily.

55 LONG SHOT—THE AMPHITHEATER—(STOCK)

with a big crowd going in.

56 FULL SHOT—FAVORING CHRIS

as he starts through the crowd toward the building. A big banner reads:

ROLL-IN RALLY FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE FT. BENNING
STOCKADE 8

CUT TO:

57 INT. LOCKER ROOM—DAY

EXTREME CLOSEUP on white crash helmets. So close they look like giant dinosaur eggs. CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal the “eggs” as helmets, conveying the impression that these are perhaps football players. PULLING BACK FARTHER, we HEAR the VOICE of the COACH OVER. A voice that is rough and deep, masculine and sandpapered, like that of a football coach prepping his players for a rough scrimmage.

COACH (haranguing them)

Now listen, you people, I want you to get in there and really smash! This isn't for fun, this is for real! Out there today you're fighting not

just for yourself, or for the honor of the team, you're fighting for America! To save it from itself! Y'understand?

Now the CAMERA PULLS BACK sufficiently to show us we are in a locker room. But still we see the players hunched over on the bench in such a way that they could be football players. We can't see the COACH because he (it certainly sounds like a he) is as short as Weeb Eubanks. But CAMERA TRAVELS CLOSE ON BACKS OF PLAYERS, DOWN THE BENCH.

COACH (CONT'D.) (soaring)

We're out there today putting our bodies on the line in behalf of eight brave men who took over a brutal U.S. Army stockade in retaliation to the vicious, inhuman treatment to which they'd been subjected. Now those men are on trial for their lives, and we've got to help raise money for their defense. This is an humanitarian act, an act of love, an act of kindness, gentleness...and I want you to get out there today and kill those goddamned egg-suckin' henna-rinsed dykes!

As the last two lines of dialogue preceding are spoken, CAMERA COMES AROUND the end of the bench and we see that the COACH speaking is an incredibly short, blocky woman with chopped short lesbian-like hair, a face like a pound of dogmeat, muscular arms protruding from a sweatshirt that houses a pair of breasts like howitzer shells, and on which is written STIGMATAS.

COACH (CONT'D.)

Now let me hear that gung-ho, let me hear how you're gonna tear out their eyes and chew on their hearts! Lemme hear it!

58 REVERSE ANGLE—FROM COACH TO PLAYERS

and as they start yelling their kill-cry, we are amazed to see these ain't bullfrog football players, they are about a dozen of the most sensational, incredibly gorgeous women we've ever encountered, decked out in roller derby uniforms, wearing skates, and now howling like Merrill's Marauders:

DERBY GIRLS

Rowwwwwrrrrrrrr! Killlll for Peace!

They continue growling as we PAN DOWN THE LINE on each face, marveling at the dichotomy between their beauty and their obvious mayhem-oriented instincts. CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE ROOM to a small alcove amid the lockers where Chris is locked in a torrid embrace with a semi-nude girl wearing panties, no bra, shoulder pads and roller skates. They are hugging and kissing as CAMERA COMES TO THEM INTO TIGHT CLOSEUP. The girl breaks the clinch first.

TIGER LILY

Where d'you want to have dinner tonight?

CHRIS

I don't know. Mexican maybe?

They go back to kissing. They break again.

TIGER LILY

House was filling up nicely.

CHRIS

It was the leaflets we dropped from the Goodyear Dirigible.

59 TWO-SHOT—CHRIS & TIGER LILY

She breaks away, reluctantly, opens a locker with the name TIGER LILY FELKOWITZ (pronounced fell-ko-vitch) on it, and pulls out hip pads, leotard, helmet and skates. She starts to put on the hip pads and Chris helps her. They talk to one another as though they were sipping tea in a sidewalk cafe.

TIGER LILY

I'm worried. There's been some talk.

CHRIS

Now just take it easy, baby. I got the permits, my attorney says everything's cool.

TIGER LILY

But we've been getting lousy phone calls...and the VFW and the American Legion posts have been picketing.

CHRIS

They always do.

TIGER LILY

Chris! You're not listening to me. I think there might be trouble!

CHRIS

Baby, I personally went down to City Hall and did the mickeymouse number with the commissioner. We have all the permits and if there's any trouble the cops will have to protect us for a change.

He helps her into the last of her gear and gives her a slap on the ass. The Coach blows a whistle and the girls move out. Tiger Lily bolts on her skates and starts to move away. She skates back and hugs Chris. She's now considerably taller than he, on skates, and his head is thrust between her breasts.

TIGER LILY

If I loved anybody, it'd be you.

CHRIS

G'wan, get out of here, you're suffocating me.

CUT TO:

60 INT. ROLLER DERBY ARENA—DAY

Auditorium seats all around. The track in the middle. The infield has been rigged with a very high platform for guest speakers. Banners everywhere proclaim the ROLL-IN RALLY FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE FT. BENNING STOCKADE 8. There is a large crowd gathered. The

EMCEE is announcing.

EMCEE

Star of stage, screen, radio and radar...Miss Barbara Dorsey!

From a gaggle of celebrities on one side of the platform steps the gorgeous BARBARA DORSEY, a blonde and sexy movie star afflicted with a case of terminal social conscience. She takes the microphone.

BARBARA (fist in air)

Power to the people!

AUDIENCE

Right on!

BARBARA

This rally is the voice of the American people, saying that just because a man serves in our Army it doesn't mean he gives up his humanity!

AUDIENCE

Right on!

BARBARA

The brutality against which these eight brave men fought has for too long been the accepted...

She continues talking in b.g. as CAMERA MOVES TOWARD the entrance from the locker rooms. The two teams of roller derby girls begin to roll out, down the aisle, to climb up onto the track. The audience begins stomping and applauding and Barbara Dorsey's sententious words are lost...but she keeps talking, though we can't hear her. The STIGMATAS emerge from one entrance over which is their club name written in huge bleeding letters. The other team emerges from a locker entrance over which the words THE ARISTOCRATS are inscribed in delicate blue.

61 ANOTHER ANGLE ON TRACK

as the girls begin circling, warming up. The Emcee takes the mike and introduces a few more people:

EMCEE

A little later we're going to hear from the eight GIs we've come here today to honor...

He waves his hand and eight guys in Green Beret uniforms step forward and wave to the crowd, clasp their hands in a boxer's victory gesture over their heads. The audience applauds.

EMCEE (CONT'D.)

The Reverend Ronald Pastore, militant man of God and author of the bestselling book, "Jesus Loves a Fat Man."

The REV. PASTORE, a very fat cleric, steps out and waves.

EMCEE (CONT'D.)

Lester Del Fey, the famous poet, critic, editor and former bantamweight soccer champion of the world...

A short, Vandyke-bearded man, extremely thin and unwell-looking (from eating one macrobiotic meal a day), dances up and waves.

EMCEE (CONT'D.)

And now...what you've all contributed to see...the roll-in rally of the roller derby...these girls skating and slugging their way into your hearts...elbowing and pummeling for freedom! Let it rip, girls!

He fires a gun into the air and the girls start their first sprint, punching and hitting and knocking each other all over the track.

CAMERA MOVES AROUND TO FOLLOW THE ACTION.

62 ON CHRIS—IN AUDIENCE

He is near the main entrance to the arena, sitting and watching the

derby as the girls whip around and around. In the center of the track infield the speakers are getting up, one after another, and haranguing the crowd, though no one really listens, everyone is too busy rooting for the teams. CAMERA UNFOCUSES FROM CHRIS and REFOCUSES several rows away, on a beautiful dark-haired girl who is watching him very pointedly. Something happens OFF-CAMERA, on the track, and the audience leaps to its feet. Chris as well. CAMERA FOCUSES ON HIM as he springs erect, yells, and half turns...and sees the girl who has been watching him—the girl we will call THE ZERO GIRL—and he looks at her for a moment.

63 CLOSE ON TIGER LILY

our incredibly beautiful but vicious young lady with the flame-red hair and the psychopathic personality as she uses a sensuous hip to throw an opposing team's player off the track. She speeds forward, makes three points by passing three Aristocrat skaters, hurls her arms in the air to show she's made the score, and the CAMERA PULLS BACK to show Chris cheering...and then turning to stare at the Zero Girl again, perplexedly.

P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

It's three points for the Stigmatas with Tiger Lily Felkowitz making the score.

CAMERA ZOOMS BACK IN on Tiger Lily as a new sprint starts.

. 64 INT. AND EXT. SERIES OF INTERCUTS

thru

71

WITH ACTION ON TRACK as Tiger Lily tries to break out of the pack. She knocks a fat girl down and kicks her in the stomach as she takes off away from the pack, all alone.

WITH REV. PASTORE IN INFIELDED as he speaks into the mike, talking to the crowd.

REV. PASTORE

These are days of conscience. No longer can we stand idly by and watch men brutalized in the name of outdated political jingoism...no longer can we...

SHOT ON LOUDSPEAKER OUTSIDE ARENA on the roof of the building as Pastore's voice comes out and washes over the crowd of people listening, over the VFW pickets carrying their signs that say GO HOME COMMIE FILTH and FREE SPEECH ISN'T FREE! and the like.

P.A. VOICE (REV. PASTORE) (FILTER)

...say we are a Christian nation when we treat men like animals, when we refuse to let them exercise their free will and judgment about the killing of other men...

ON THE CROWD as small fistfights break out between the supporters of the rally and the ultra-straight pickets and their goon-supporters in butch haircuts and pea-picker clothing.

ON THE ZERO GIRL watching Chris and CAMERA BACK IN FOCUS on Chris as he watches Tiger Lily and then looks back over his shoulder at the Zero Girl.

WITH TIGER LILY as she rapidly circles the track, comes in on the pack from behind where three of the Aristocrats have joined hands to make a chain across the track. She tries to break it.

THE LOUDSPEAKER OUTSIDE with the Reverend's voice droning, and CAMERA PANS DOWN AND TO THE RIGHT on a string of police cars and meat wagons pulling up in front of the arena.

WITH TIGER LILY as she tries to break the chain again, to jump it, to get through, and the three Aristocrats hurl her up against the railing. She hits it at breakneck speed, spins over in a Tennessee Roll and lands:

72 ON CHRIS

in his lap. Ass over teakettle.

73 THE MAIN ENTRANCE OF ARENA

as the swinging doors burst open and COMMISSIONER OTTO STIPPEL stands there. The doors are held open by two enormous, burly TAC/SQUAD COPS with plastic visors over their helmets, batons at the ready, guns in unflapped holsters, black leather, the works.

74 ON CHRIS

as he sees them. He shoves Tiger Lily off his lap.

CHRIS

Uh-oh, we got trouble.

TIGER LILY

Who is that?

CHRIS

Commissioner Stippel.

TIGER LILY

I thought you said we had the permits?

CHRIS

I did.

He gets up and goes to Stippel, who is looking around and motioning to a couple of other Tac/Squad cops to come in. Behind him in the corridor we can see a long line of Tac/Squad cops waiting.

75 TWO-SHOT—CHRIS & STIPPEL

as Chris comes up to him, looking worried. ALL OF THE VARIOUS
ACTION CONTINUES IN B.G.

CHRIS

Commissioner...?

STIPPEL

You in charge here?

CHRIS

I'm Chris Stopa, from the Stopa Bank. I came to see you about the permits?

STIPPEL

I remember you, boy. Are you in charge here?

CHRIS

Why, what seems to be the matter?

STIPPEL

You have loudspeakers outside, broadcasting to the crowds.

CHRIS

Well, of course, the crowd was too big to get them all in here, we had to—

STIPPEL

You're in defiance of County Ordinance 558, section C pertaining to use of public address systems.

CHRIS

But you said the permits were all in order.

STIPPEL

For inside, not outside.

CHRIS

Why didn't you tell us, we'd have applied for...

STIPPEL

I don't want to argue with you, boy. This meeting is now in defiance of the law and we're going to call it to a halt.

CHRIS

Wait a minute, you can't—

STIPPEL

Oh can't I?

He motions the cops forward, and the next moment the entire line of Tac/Squad cops rushes in and starts going through the audience.

76 ON JUNE PRATT & SIDNEY "THE BEAR" GROSS

who are standing beside the loudspeaker rig, adjusting the equipment, as two cops come on them. SIDNEY is a huge bear of a man, with bushy beard and hair tied back in a samurai knot. JUNE PRATT is a petite girl in a miniskirt. The cops come up and start to yank the plugs. Pastore's voice suddenly goes out (and though we can see him on the platform, still talking, he cannot be heard). The Bear is dumbfounded. June goes to stop the cops.

JUNE

Stop that!

The cop swings his baton, knocking her into the wall. As she rebounds he hits her again. She goes down with a bloodied head. Sidney grabs the cop by the baton and pulls him off-balance. He grabs the cop by the neck and the crotch and lifts him over his head.

77 ON CHRIS

as he sees Sidney “The Bear” Gross holding the cop in the air.

CHRIS (horrified)

Sidney! No!

Sidney hurls the cop away from him. The cop hits the nearest row of seats and literally pulls the chairs up out of the floor by the bolts as he crashes through them.

78 ON ACTION

as four cops hit The Bear at once. Their batons go up and down and up again as they beat him in the ribs and back.

79 ON REV. PASTORE

as he sees what’s happening out there...and as he realizes he can’t be heard. He cups his hands and starts to scream.

REV. PASTORE

The police are here. Please don’t fight. Non-violent. We mustn’t turn this into a riot. Please!

80 ON STIPPEL

as he turns to another cop.

STIPPEL

Cover that man’s voice.

The cop rushes over to the loudspeaker system and flips on a switch. Suddenly roller-skating music—roller rink waltzes—come out of the loudspeakers, drowning out Pastore.

CHRIS (to Stippel)

What are you doing? This is a peaceful rally!

STIPPEL

Too late to stop it now, punk. You shouldn't have attacked an officer of the law.

81 FULL SHOT

on the audience as the Tac/Squad cops move among them, and they climb onto the platform and start to grab Pastore and Del Fey and Barbara Dorsey and the Emcee. The eight soldiers wade in and start to fight with the cops. The cops get reinforcements and start knocking the soldiers down. Then the whole arena erupts.

82 INTERCUT ACTION

thru

90

CAMERA SHOOTS THRU a line of cops lock-stepping forward, pushing and prodding the audience against a wall using their batons, point-forward.

MEDIUM SHOT ON CHRIS as he grabs Stippel by the collar.

CHRIS

Stop them, you sonofabitch! Make them stop it!

A cop with a kid down on the floor, using the baton across his throat to keep him subdued, just as we have seen such shots in authentic newsphoto or newsreel coverage.

Three roller derby girls with arms linked come skating past, barrel into a cop and knock him on his ass. Five more cops attack them. One of the roller derby girls is a Stigmata, two of them are Aristocrats.

Cops hauling kids across the floor by their long hair, by their legs, some using the baton across the neck to facilitate transport.

The Rev. Pastore being almost duck-walked toward the door by a cop using his baton as a prod, the holy man's eyes turned to Heaven as he murmurs prayers and crosses himself.

People lying on the floor bleeding. Kids trying to perform first aid on other kids who are down. Kids hanging on the restraining rail around the derby track.

Three members of the audience with a cop between them, beating him with his own nightstick.

A cop laying his baton against Tiger Lily's thighs and shoving her backwards over seats. Chris goes for him, leaving Stippel; he grabs the cop by the dangling strap of his helmet, swings him around, and drops a fist into his face. Another cop comes out of nowhere and grabs Chris, turning him, and suddenly sprays him right in the face with a can of Mace.

LONG SHOT of the pepperfog macers spraying the audience. People running and screaming, streaming toward the front door where cops beat them through the gauntlet into the waiting arms of the meat wagon attendants.

91 EXT. ARENA

as the cops push and jam people into the wagons, one on another. Kids try to sit down, are clubbed and maced and then thrown in with their fellows. And the loudspeakers keep playing the Skater's Waltz.

92 INT. ARENA—NEW ANGLE ON CHRIS

as he stumbles around, having escaped the cops who maced him, his eyes streaming, his collar ripped, and all around him there is violence. As he whirls past Lester Del Fey, who is struggling with a cop who outsizes him five-to-one, Del Fey screams:

DEL FEY

Thoreau said civil disobedience is...

INTERCUT TO:

93 EXT. WALDEN POND—DAY

A BUCOLIC SCENE with a man who looks like Henry David Thoreau sitting fishing by the edge of the pond. Woods all around. Birds twittering. The man turns to us, doffs his straw hat, and very seriously says:

THOREAU

He serves the state best who opposes the state most.

He replaces his hat, goes back to fishing and CAMERA PANS SLIGHTLY LEFT TO A BIG TREE. Harlan steps out from behind the tree. He smiles.

HARLAN

It is a little-known fact—but true nonetheless—that the urine content of Walden Pond is sixty-three percent higher than that of any other pond in the surrounding area.

CUT BACK TO:

94 ARENA

Incredible violence. Derby girls skating around trying to get out. One of them crashes through a window. Another gets her helmet shattered by a cop's baton. The Bear reels through, bloody and ruined, screaming:

THE BEAR

You'll never take me alive, pig! Peace on earth, good will to men...and to hell with Pat O'Brien!

95 EXT. ARENA—ON CLUTCH OF COP CARS

CLOSE ON POLICE CHIEF. He has a hand-mike in his mitt. He is obviously the police chief. Violence abounds.

POLICE CHIEF (mildly)

Good evening. This is the six o'clock report. We're at the eyewitness scene of massive civil disobedience, here at the Amphitheater...

96 INT. ARENA—ON CHRIS

as he's slammed to the floor by a cop who grabs his left arm and stomps on the shoulder. Then he drags him to his feet and, using the baton across Chris's neck, he hustles him through the door. SHOT THRU DOOR AS SEEN THRU PEPPERFOG MIST: Chris and Tiger Lily being thrown into the same meat wagon.

97 INT. MEAT WAGON—MOVING—ON CHRIS & TIGER LILY

as they are trundled through the streets.

CUT TO:

98 INTERCUT—PARIS STREET—(STOCK)

ON A TUMBREL of prisoners intended for the guillotine. Chris and Tiger Lily in the garb of the French Revolution. Ahead we see the guillotine and a horde of middle-class housewives all cut in the mode of Madame Defarge, who spit on the prisoners and throw stones and follow the tumbrel as it wends its way to their death.

CUT BACK TO:

99 INT. MEAT WAGON

Chris is holding his shoulder. He doesn't seem badly hurt but his face has changed. Hard as a rock. Bitter. Angry. Vengeful. Tiger Lily is bleeding from a cut on the head. Her face is swollen. A great black hematoma is draining down one side of her face. Both eyes are puffed shut; her lips are puffed.

TIGER LILY

Chris...?

He looks at her, across a long distance. The CAMERA HOLDS on his look of alienation.

TIGER LILY (CONT'D.)

We can't let this stop us. We'll hold another rally.

He moves his mouth and then his jaw tightens.

CHRIS (cold)

No, thanks.

TIGER LILY

But we have to!

CHRIS

Fuck it. No more rallies. No more sitting and watching. Not for me.

She stares at him. CAMERA HOLDS FOR LONG BEAT on his face and the shadows of the meat wagon's wire windows behind him as we

CUT TO:

100 INT. COURTROOM—CLOSEUP—JUDGE—DAY

as his beady little eyes slither left and right. It is dead silent.

BAILIFF'S VOICE (O.S.)

Oyez, oyez, oyez, this court is now in session, Judge Roy Bean, the hanging judge, presiding.

101 REVERSE ANGLE—JUDGE'S POV

The courtroom is packed. And in the aisle seat, where she can prominently be seen, is THE ZERO GIRL whom we saw in the roll-in sequence. Dark, mysterious, ethereally beautiful, she watches Chris throughout this scene. Armed MARSHALS stand around the perimeter of the courtroom.

The accused. Eight of them. All those whom we saw in the roll-in sequence, plus several more. They look like the last residents of Buchenwald. The girls are red-eyed and covered with dirt. Arms in slings. Soiled bandages over eyes and swathing around heads. The SOUND of the JUDGE'S GAVEL.

. 102 FULL SHOT—FAVORING JUDGE—INTERCUT WITH CLOSEUP OF ACCUSED

thru

111

As he points to each one of the defendants.

JUDGE

Reverend Ronald Pastore: you will write on the blackboard 1000 times, "Jesus Saves."

(beat)

Sidney "The Bear" Gross: go to bed without any supper.

(beat)

Crazy June Pratt: no dates for six weeks and you can't have your Pills.

(beat)

Lester Del Fey: six weeks in solitary confinement reading Jacqueline Susann novels.

Del Fey breaks down and begins to whimper piteously. Now Judge Bean turns a calculating eye on the movie queen, Barbara Dorsey, whose skirt is ripped to the hip.

JUDGE (CONT'D.)

Barbara Dorsey: we'll discuss this at Palm Springs next weekend.

CAMERA HOLDS on CHRIS as he grows nervous, wrinkles his brow and gives the appearance of a man who knows he's being watched. Tiger Lily, beside him, becomes aware of his nervousness. Then Chris slowly turns his head to look behind and to the side...and the Zero

Girl comes into FOCUS in her seat...watching him. They stare at each other for a long beat as the judge in b.g. makes bibble-bibble, sentencing others. Chris turns back, looking disturbed. Tiger Lily nudges him.

TIGER LILY (whispering)

Who's that?

Judge Roy Bean (whose nameplate says "The Hanging Judge") levels a look at Chris and Tiger Lily.

JUDGE

You two are obviously the ringleaders of this disgraceful riot. It is clearly evident that you purposely provoked the crowd and the police into a confrontation.

CHRIS

Would you say that if we'd been Kiwanis on a spree?

JUDGE

Shut up! Speak when I tell you to speak.

TIGER LILY (to the hall)

Bring Pontius Pilate some water...he wants to wash his hands.

JUDGE (furious)

No punishment I could mete out would be sufficient to match the enormity of your crimes!

Chris paces forward, looking like a man about to face a firing squad. (An inept firing squad that would botch the job and have to fire six or eight volleys.)

CHRIS

I demand the right to speak!

JUDGE (apoplectic)

Freedom of speech does not entitle you to yell “Fire!” in a crowded movie house!

TIGER LILY

Creep!

JUDGE

Contempt!

TIGER LILY

Fascist!

JUDGE

Contempt!

TIGER LILY

Pig!

JUDGE

Okay for you! I was going to show you some leniency...but oh no, you had to shoot off your big mouth!

He pauses, reaches under the counter and places the black cloth used in English courts when a death sentence is to be passed, on his head. Everyone gasps.

JUDGE (CONT'D.) (sepulchrally)

Christopher Stopa...Bertha Felkowitz...

CHRIS (interrupts; to Tiger Lily)

I didn't know your name was Bertha.

TIGER LILY

I changed it for business reasons.

JUDGE

Come on, knock it off!

They sober down, and the Judge re-assumes his funeral mien. Steeples his hands, and a ghoulis light comes into his eyes.

JUDGE (CONT'D.)

I sentence you to a hundred and seventeen years on...

112 FREEZE FRAME—EFFECTS

Everything goes negative like a reverse photograph. Then the negative freeze-frame CUTS THROUGH various colors: blue, green, red, yellow. But always the same scene, the courtroom flash-frozen. And as this weird effect passes in FLASH FRAMES we HEAR a godlike VOICE OVER in echoing tones as though coming to us from Olympus...or maybe Capitol Hill:

VOICE OF GOD (FILTER)

Devil's Island!

The words are repeated over and over, rising in pitch, as we:

CUT TO:

113 EXT. DEVIL'S ISLAND—DAY (STOCK)

Oh my God! Steaming fetid jungle, mist rising from the muck. Quicksand bubbling everywhere. A volcano in the b.g. with smoke pouring out of it. Lush tropical foliage. Tse-tse flies. An endless string of men stripped to the waist, covered with mud and filth and bits of leaves, all ankle-chained together, wielding shovels and picks in the digging of what is obviously a senseless trench. As CAMERA PANS DOWN the line of convicts (striped pants, of course), we see one man fall in the traces. No one notices. Another man is sinking into the quicksand, dragging a fern bough in after him. No one notices as he gurgles and vanishes. A bubble breaks the surface. Another man suddenly clutches his head, turns purple and falls, tongue lolling. No one notices. Down the line we go, with the men singing NOBODY KNOW DE TRUBBLE I DONE SEEN (with intermittent chants of "I gwine down de lebbbee, I gwine eat de wawdymelon, yuk yuk") and comes to rest on Chris and Tiger Lily, similarly chained.

Stripped to the waist. Both of them. Tiger Lily has a proud, coral-tipped set of snow-white breasts. Which are mosquito-bitten. They both look awful. Stubble-bearded Chris and stringy-haired Tiger Lily, digging this dumb trench. They talk conversationally:

CHRIS

How was your day, Honey?

TIGER LILY

Not bad, sweetheart. I got little Tommy off to school and then went down to the Blue Chip redemption center.

CHRIS

Did we have enough books for the patio chairs?

TIGER LILY

No, but I got us the cutest bathroom scale.

CHRIS

What's for supper?

TIGER LILY

Your favorite.

CHRIS

Mmmm!

TIGER LILY

Melting turtles, a cup of warm hair and a parsnip in a pear tree.

CHRIS

Honey, I don't mean to kvetch and complain, but I think the straw boss is looking for trouble.

INTERCUT TO:

The scene in the jungle with the amuck stegosaurus eating the crew of the ship. Men screaming as they are gobbled and trampled. Another SHOT, of Kong shaking the great log over the chasm and the men dropping off like rag dolls.

CUT BACK TO:

116 COURTROOM—FREEZE

and we are where we were before the Devil's Island interlude.

JUDGE

I sentence you to...

Suddenly a VOICE O.S. stops him.

PERRY MASON'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hold it, Roy Bean, the Hanging Judge. We wish to appear as counsel for the accused.

Judge Roy Bean looks up as a stream of people enter the courtroom from the rear and array themselves in a line before the bench, right behind Chris and Tiger Lily. The newcomers are:

NON-SPEAKING CAMEOS

Raymond Burr as Perry Mason

E.G. Marshall and Robert Reed as The Defenders

James Whitmore as Mr. Jones

Edmond O'Brien as Sam Benedict

Carl Betz and Stephen Young as Judd and Ben

Burl Ives, Joe Campanella and James Farentino as The Lawyers

Judge Roy Bean stares at them a moment, and his face gets florid. He begins to tremble.

JUDGE

You can't buffalo me! I don't care how impressive an array of shysters you line up, nothing can make me change my mind...

as the courtroom doors swing open again, and a second line of men stride into the room. They line up two deep behind the shysters, a short distance between them. They are stylized gunslingers. The most unseemly, raunchy, deadly-looking bunch of pistoleros who ever bit dust. Black vests, low-slung six-guns, sawed-off shotguns, whips, dark slouched sombreros and ten-gallon Stetsons, dirty boots, ocher stubs of hand-rolled cigarettes and cheroots dangling from their mouths, they are the most evil, dangerous cutthroats we've ever seen. CAMERA MOVES IN STATELY BUT RAPID FASHION AROUND TO CATCH JUDGE ROY BEAN'S EXPRESSION. The word is scared. An adjective to the word might be shitless.

JUDGE

On the other hand...

118 CLOSEUP ON CHRIS & TIGER LILY

She grins wickedly, triumphantly. He simply turns and walks out as the waves of gunslingers part for him, and we:

CUT TO:

119 INT. LIVING ROOM, CHRIS'S HOUSE—HIGH, LONG SHOT—NIGHT

It is obviously his deceased father's home. The room is enormous, with bookcases going from floor-to-ceiling on every wall. No windows. A fireplace burns, casting eerie flickers of light on the walls, the thick pile carpet, the bookcases, even the fumed oak beams of the high ceiling. We are HIGH and AWAY in the farthest, highest corner of the room with our CAMERA. Chris sits in a huge wingback chair before the fireplace, his hands steepled in front of him, elbows resting on the arms of the chair. He is thinking, staring into the fire. MUSIC IS PLAYING. But the music is loud. Jeezus, it's loud! About 380 decibels. It dominates, overrides, pulses, slams at the ears. It is hard rock of the most intrusive sort.

CAMERA SLOWLY DESCENDS TOWARD Chris so we can see he is really heavy behind some deep thought. Down and down and down

we come, till we come into CLOSEUP on Chris, with the music beating at us mercilessly. Then, when we hit the EXTREME CLOSEUP, he suddenly reaches over, punches the button that cuts the sound and we are walloped by the THUNDERING SILENCE which holds for three beats and then, resigned, having made up his mind, Chris says simply:

CHRIS

Okay.

CUT TO:

120 INT. RAND CORPORATION (STOCK)

CAMERA MOVING BACK ON TRACK between rows of secretaries taking dictation off tape recorders on their IBM Selectrics. The only SOUND we HEAR is the sound of that typeface ball whirling, magnified a millionfold. An antiseptic scene of sterility. The words RAND and CORPORATION should be on one wall, the letters being revealed one by one.

CAMERA PANS TO THE RIGHT to a small glass cubicle and moves in on it. Legend on the glass window says JAMES KENNERLEE—THEORY DEVELOPMENT. Inside the cubicle we see Kennerlee, a tall, good-looking guy with glasses, sleeves rolled up, gesticulating and talking to three other men, all in suits.

121 INT. RAND CUBICLE—ON KENNERLEE

as he jabs a finger at some sheets of jampacked figures. There is an analog computer on one side of the desk and he punches out something, and as it coughs out more analysis he fires words at the other men.

As he is speaking, the door opens and a SECRETARY brings in a telegram.

KENNERLEE

Now I'm not going to use these analyses to help you figure National

Guard deployment on the campus when I can show you

(punches analog)

games and system theory that will allow you to decentralize the classes for optimum retention in overcrowded classrooms...

(Secretary hands him telegram)

thereby dissipating hostility for “Dear Mr. Kennerlee, you are cordially invited to a black tie dinner at the request of Mr. Christopher Stopa of the Stopa Bank, Saturday night the 18th; Mr. Stopa’s staff and Lear Jet will be engaged to bring you to Los Angeles at our expense. We feel this meeting will be of the utmost importance to your future. RSVP, area code 213, 685-2928. Sincerely, N. Sutherland, for Mr. Stopa.” and you can do away almost entirely with the tensions that cause riots...

CUT TO:

122 INT. RESEARCH HANGAR—ON AFTERBURNER OF COMBAT JET
LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT—DAY

CAMERA IN on the round tubular opening of a jet. The white pyroceram lining rises away from us as a stocky man with bushy hair, KARL MARDIF, tosses his jacket to one of several white-overalled engineers and climbs the step-stool to crawl into the aperture. He is talking as he climbs in, and then a suited man walks in and hands him a telegram identical to the one in scene above.

MARDIF

I told those bastards this lining wouldn’t take the temperature variations for their damned defoliation flights...

Halfway into the afterburner, lying on his back, Mardif tears open the telegram handed to him, reads it, clucks his tongue and jams it into a pocket. He pushes in farther.

CUT TO:

123 GENERAL MOTORS PLANT—ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE—
RESEARCH AREA TO ONE SIDE—DAY

an extraordinarily beautiful woman, tall and slim, DENISE PETRA,

holding an enormous sledgehammer, has two test windshields set up in impact cradles. There is a group of technicians and plant executives (all men) gathered around her. She is dressed in the height of femininity, there is nothing dyke-like or masculine about her, and she is a stunner. She wears spark-goggles.

DENISE

Gentlemen, this is your best windshield...

She swings the sledgehammer. It hits the window with a tremendous crash, sending safety-glass splinters flying everywhere, as everyone ducks. She pulls the sledgehammer out of the ruined window as a girl hurries up and hands her a telegram. She lowers the hammer for a moment as the men stare at the shattered window, and she reads it. Then she puts it in her pocket and lifts the hammer again.

DENISE (CONT'D.)

...and this is the best my development department can do...

She swings it again, as hard as before. The hammer rebounds, flies out of her hands and smashes into some machinery with an awesome clang!

DENISE (CONT'D.)

Now. Let's talk about automobile safety.

CUT TO:

124 EXT. OCEAN—TEXAS TOWER—DAY (STOCK)

Sign on the oil rig says STANDARD OIL. There is a huge, ugly oilslick surrounding the well. CAMERA COMES DOWN to a group of men trying to seal the blowout.

125 CLOSE ANGLE ON BEN DeMARCO

Wearing a business suit and hard hat, he is obviously the ramrod of the outfit. He shoves an inept rigger out of the way and soaks his suit

to the elbows in oil as he tightens a fitting properly. As DeMarco steps back, letting the rigger resume, a man comes up and hands DeMarco a telegram. He reads it, pulls off his hard hat and sticks the telegram inside, thrusts the hat back on his head and moves in beside them to resume work.

CUT TO:

126 INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE—NIGHT

The same room in which Chris made his decision. Well-lit, a wall-bar open, a butler serving drinks to the TEN MEN IN BLACK TIE AND DINNER JACKETS and DENISE PETRA in a sexually arousing evening gown. Chris is also in a tux. There is rock music playing, but of a more soothing kind—perhaps Crosby, Stills & Nash or its like—and the tenor of the gathering is low-key, informal (despite the formal wear) and conducive to talk.

KENNERLEE

As far as I can tell, Mr. Stopa, few of us you've invited here have anything in common.

Chris begins circling Denise Petra. She is aware of him and there is some heat between the two. She is a strong, forceful woman, extremely self-assured and poised, but pliant nonetheless. They circle each other without saying a word out of context of the business discussion, but it is the timeless pavane of men and women withal.

CHRIS

You have a great deal in common.

MARDIF

Such as?

CHRIS

You're all part of my five-year plan.

Another man, KENNETH KLEIN, young but round-shouldered, speaks for the first time.

KLEIN

Planning to take over the world, Mr. Stopa?

CHRIS (turns to him)

Ten points, Mr., uh, you're Ken Klein from 3M, aren't you?

(Klein nods, bewildered)

Carnegie-Mellon, Class of '68, graduated ninth in your class...you're the first one of this bunch who gets the right to call me Chris. We're gonna do good things together, Ken.

KLEIN (sharp)

You can call me Mr. Klein till I calculate your points.

CHRIS

Right on.

(beat; he turns to DeMarco)

I hear you've got an idea for a vacuum implosion plug to stop underwater oil well blowouts? How'd you like to go into business for yourself, making them?

He doesn't wait for an answer. Turns to Kennerlee.

CHRIS

Mr. Kennerlee, where're you going to get the capital to start your own company? America needs a systems analysis firm to gauge social tension.

(to Mardif)

Hey, Mr. Mardif, why haven't you developed your personal backpack helicopter? Afraid Lockheed will insist it's theirs since you developed it while working for them?

(to Denise)

Miss Petra...the crashproof car...

DENISE

Hold it, Mr. Stopa.

CHRIS

Chris.

DENISE

I haven't made my points yet.

CHRIS

That's what you think.

DENISE (smiles)

I think the tease has gone on long enough, Mr. Stopa. Why not tell us what we're all doing here?

As the preceding three interchanges are spoken, the BUTLER is moving through the gathering, handing men their coats. Now he comes to Denise and helps her into her wrap as Chris takes her arm and the whole group moves out of the living room/study into the large front hall. The butler hurries on ahead and opens the door to the outside. Dialogue continues:

CHRIS

You're here because my bank wants to set you up in business doing whatever you want to do.

KENNERLEE

Genies usually come in jugs.

MARDIF

I knew I had charisma, but free millions is more than I counted on.

DENISE

These gentlemen seem to think there's a catch, Mr. Stopa.

CHRIS

How about you?

DENISE

I don't care...right now. Someone offers me money, I listen first and look for fish-hooks later.

They follow Chris and Denise out the front door.

127 EXT. HOUSE—ON FRONT DOOR—NIGHT

PAST A LINE OF ROLLS ROYCES lined up in the drive. As they come out the front door and begin to fill up the necessary number of cars dialogue continues, and becomes VOICE OVER when the doors of the cars are closed, and continues as the cars move out.

CHRIS

I went back through all the yearbooks from MIT, CalTech, Harvard Business, Chicago U...all the big think-tanks, for the last ten years to find the people who were the sharpest, the ones who were best bait for the big corporations. Then I traced each one of them to the company that snagged him, and five years later I found about half of the ones on my bar graph had cut out and gone into shop for themselves, making some sort of little plastic grommet or pin or doohickey that was absolutely essential.

(beat)

They were all millionaires.

DENISE

And you went through the yearbooks five years ago and found the next batch, the ones ready to leave the parent companies and go off on their own.

MARDIF

And we're the ones you figured were the best risks.

CHRIS

That's right; calculated risks. And certainly all of you won't make it; but if I bankroll you now, chances are statistically good that I'll be in on the ground floor with those of you who do make it.

128 EXT. GARBAGE DUMP—NIGHT

as the line of Rolls Royces pulls into a large garbage dump. Great mounds of refuse are everywhere. Smoking pillars of dreck being burned send Bosch-like plumes of smoke into the night sky. They weave through the garbage mountains till they come to a stop, and people begin to alight.

DeMARCO

What's in it for you?

CHRIS

You wouldn't believe me if I told you, and what's worse, you'd think I was out of my mes-o-po-tam-ee-un mind.

A good-looking young man who hasn't spoken before, JED BENFORD, now speaks.

BENFORD

I think I'm hip to what you're doing, Mr. Stopa. But why me? I don't have any widget or wadget or missile nozzles.

CHRIS

Jed Benford, right...?

BENFORD (impatiently)

Yeah, yeah, right. Rochester School of Design, 1967, sixth in my class. Why me?

CHRIS

What's your dream, Mr. Benford?

129 CLOSEUP

ON A LEATHER CASE (the kind one might find filled with sterling silverware). As CAMERA PULLS BACK from case and we see it is in the hands of the butler, as he emerges from one of the Rolls Royces, followed by three other Butlers, each with a case. The CAMERA GOES WITH the Butler as he comes to Chris and Kennerlee and Benford and Denise, standing in a small group. He opens the lid and the CAMERA LINGERS on the contents: four beautiful, matched .45 automatics with

ivory handles. Chris takes one, hefts it. The others take theirs. The conversation goes on. The Butler puts the case away and breaks out an enormous eight-cell flashlight.

BENFORD

To make the best possible comfortable furniture at the lowest possible price. The kind of stuff that won't fall apart in five years. Stuff that's made without borax, stuff to last 100 years.

130 MED. SHOT—MOVING WITH BUTLERS

as they pass among the rest of the group and hand out .45's. The butlers each come equipped with a big flashlight, and they begin shining them around the garbage dump. As this happens, one of the other Rolls Royces in the line opens and out come miniskirted serving girls (little French maid outfits). They carry silver trays on which reside ice buckets with Mumms champagne chilling, crystal champagne glasses, little hors d'oeuvres, the works. They pass among the crowd, distributing drinks. Dialogue continues:

CHRIS

Okay, that's what you'll make. Good inexpensive furniture that won't turn to shit about the time the installment payments stop.

KENNERLEE

Prime rate today is eight to ten percent. Depending on what the money's for it can go as high as sixteen.

(beat)

What's the interest rate on the loans, Mr. Stopa?

131 CLOSEUP—A RAT ON GARBAGE

SHOOT PAST THE RAT—a big, ugly, whisker-twitching, rope-tailed plague-carrier sitting on top of a mound of orange rinds, tin cans, nameless goo and dirt—to the crowd in the mid-b.g. A butler's flashlight beam lances around the garbage, hits the rat and holds. The evil little red eyes sparkle and the rat takes a leap as Chris in the b.g.

tracks him and:

132 ON CHRIS

as he fires. The rat is pinned in the beam of the flash, on the rise. Chris hits him dead center and blows his ass off. Chris turns and answers Kennerlee's question.

CHRIS

Five-and-a-half percent, baby.

The others begin firing at rats. The dinner party is a rat-shoot in a garbage dump. Tah-dahhhhh!

133 VARIOUS ANGLES

as the crowd opens up from every angle on the rats. There is an unspoken code of hunting, however: never shoot a sitting rat. It ain't sportsmanlike. You've got to catch them on the fly. Oh, the grandeur, oh, the anachronism: beautiful people in tuxes and evening gowns, sipping champagne with one hand as they pot the *rattus norvegicus* with the other. The butlers lance their beams here and there, making the whole thing very surrealistic, and a good time is had by all.

134 CLOSE WITH CHRIS

as two butler-beams suddenly converge as two different rats leap, and Chris snaps off a shot, even as a second shot erupts beside him. As the shots go off, CAMERA PULLS BACK JUST ENOUGH to show us Denise standing beside him, the .45 straight out, the muzzle smoking and we:

135 CLOSE ON RATS—PAST THEM TO CHRIS & DENISE IN B.G.

as the two rats lay dead, one atop the other. And in the b.g.—

symbolically, may we suggest—stand Chris and Denise, side-by-side. And we HOLD for several beats on the two dead rodents, as we:

MATCH CUT TO:

136 INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM—DENISE & CHRIS IN BED

One atop the other, like the dead rats, but without any symbolism. Just good clean fun. He is kissing her. She is kissing him. Then they break and he stays on top, but they talk.

DENISE

If we all hit, Chris, that's a lot of money.

CHRIS

You won't all hit. About half of you will bomb out. I expect it.

DENISE

Which of us?

CHRIS

Not you, baby. You're too good a shot.

In a coruscating nimbus of soft lights, Chris sinks down and they begin to make love, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

137 INT. DOW CHEMICAL BOARDROOM IN NEW YORK—CLOSE ON
COLOR PHOTO OF DEAD VIETNAMESE BABIES—DAY

CAMERA PULLS BACK as we HEAR a MECHANICAL CLICK (the sound of a slide projector rejecting one shot and slipping the next slide in). Another shot of atrocity in war.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Hit it.

Another click, another slide, another horror.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hit it.

Again.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hit it.

Again.

CAMERA PULLS BACK to show us Chris in front of a large stockholders' meeting. The officers of Dow sit to one side, faces granite, hating every moment of this. The stockholders are getting restless. This goes on for an extended period as we flash the most ugly, heinous shots of death and slaughter we can find. Burned bodies, razed villages, men with their heads blown off, mothers trying to hurl their babies out of the line of fire.

1st STOCKHOLDER (leaps up)

All right, what the hell is this supposed to be?!

CHRIS (imperturbable)

Hit it!

Now others through the audience are rising, shaking their fists at Chris, who keeps the same imperturbable expression, keeps saying the same thing, keeps flashing newer and greater horrors.

2nd STOCKHOLDER

Stop it, you freak!

CHRIS

Hit it!

3rd STOCKHOLDER

He can't do this! Stop him! Stop him, somebody!

Chris keeps the slides coming one after another, but he steps up to the front of the boardroom audience as he does it.

CHRIS

We all own stock in Dow Chemical! Hit it! And Dow makes oven cleaner and plastic wrap and disinfectant—hit it—and a thousand other things that make people happier. Hit it!

1st FEMALE STOCKHOLDER

You bastard! Stop it, stop it!

CHRIS

But it makes jellied gasoline, too. It makes napalm that burns out the eyes and turns them to ashes...hit it...and it fries babies alive...hit it...and it kills old men and women like you and you and you...hit it...and we get fat off the stinking bodies.

4th STOCKHOLDER (tries to crawl over chairs to Chris)

You son of a bitch, I'll kill you!

CHRIS (fends him off)

And we don't even make the most money from it!

Everything stops. No one moves as Chris strangles them into silence with their own greed. HOLD EVERYONE FROZEN FOR SEVERAL BEATS...then a particularly rednecked creep hurls a lamp across the room, yelling:

REDNECK STOCKHOLDER

He's an egg-suckin' liar!

And the action starts up again.

The 4th Stockholder continues to try and reach Chris, but suddenly he's grabbed from behind by a 2nd FEMALE STOCKHOLDER who pulls him around so he trips over a chair and falls down.

2nd FEMALE STOCKHOLDER

He's right! Listen to him!

Abruptly, the room is a maelstrom of thrashing bodies and flailing fists. One man leaps the chairs and comes at Chris, who decks him with a hard left over the heart. The fight boils up and the mass of combatants fills the screen.

138 GO TO SLOW MOTION AND STROBE EFFECT

as the fight becomes almost ballet, with each blow that is thrown radiating out in a series of overlapping images.

139 SLOWER MOTION and EVEN SLOWER till we:

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

140 BOARDROOM—DAY

The scene after the battle. The chairs in the room have now been pulled into two camps, facing one another from across the room. Half the stockholders are in one camp, half in the other. All are disheveled and nursing bruises. Broken chairs and tables are stacked and jumbled in a mass in the center of the room. But hostilities are now over. Chris sits on the edge of the boardroom table, which is broken in the middle as though a large man had been slammed through it.

CHRIS (softly)

Now perhaps we can talk to each other.

2nd STOCKHOLDER

What is it you want?

CHRIS

You've seen my credentials. You know what size block of stock my bank owns. I'm sure there are enough stockholders here who know what I want—who've had the same wants for a long time—who haven't been able to speak out—so we could carry a power play if it came to that. But I don't want it to come to that.

4th STOCKHOLDER (with hankie to bloody nose)

Well, dammit, what do you want?

CHRIS

No more napalm.

1st STOCKHOLDER

You're crazy!

CHRIS

No more war materiel.

5th STOCKHOLDER

Our dividends, damn you!

CHRIS

And I'll show you how we can double the profits this year.

4th STOCKHOLDER (rising)

It can't hurt to let him talk.

CUT TO:

141 INT. CHRIS'S OFFICE—DAY—CLOSEUP OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINES THAT READ:

NO MORE NAPALM: DOW

HIPPIE BANKER PUTS OUT DOW FIRE

NO MORE WAR PLOYS SAY DOW STOCKHOLDERS

A big paste-brush hits the headlines and suddenly they rise up as CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see that Chris is having a side of his office wallpapered with the evidence of his victory. Nan stands beside Chris, watching and smiling. The paper hanger works to one side.

142 CLOSER SHOT ON PAPER HANGER

as he turns to see if Chris and Nan approve the job. The paper hanger, of course, is a dead ringer for ADOLF HITLER. He smiles at Chris.

HITLER (no accent)

How's this, Mr. Stopa?

CHRIS

Dynamite, Seymour.

The paper hanger gathers his ladder and paste pots and splits. Chris goes to his desk.

NAN

How'd you like to take me to lunch?

Chris is paying attention to the papers on the desk, but his avoidance of what is implied is quite clear.

CHRIS

Maybe. Let's get through this first.

He signs some papers, mumbles some disjointed words of instruction that Nan picks up on, and then, suddenly, there is a timid little knock on the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Come on, it's open.

The door opens and Joey is standing there.

NAN (surprised)

Joey? What are you doing here?

JOEY

I came to—

NAN

Can't you see we're working...dear. Mr. Stopa can't have people barging in on him while he's working...

Chris gets up quickly from behind the desk, pushes past Nan and goes

to the boy. He grabs him up and takes him back to the desk. He stands him on the desk amid the paperwork.

CHRIS

She's kidding, man. I was hoping someone like you'd come along so I could knock off. What's happening?

NAN

Oh, Chris, please, he shouldn't—

He gives her a look that cuts her off at mid-mouth.

CHRIS

What're you into, trooper?

JOEY

Nothin'. I just came in t'see what time Mom'd be comin' home.

NAN

I'll be working late, honey.

CHRIS

Who says?

She looks at him with a coquettish expression.

NAN

I thought we had a lot to catch up on, Chris.

He ignores it. Turns back to the kid.

CHRIS

Listen, Joey, let's say this was the best of all possible worlds...let's say you could do anything, what would you want to do? Movie?

JOEY

Naw, too early for a show.

CHRIS

Ice cream?

JOEY

Yeah, that's nice, but it ain't no big deal.

NAN

Isn't.

JOEY

Isn't no big deal.

CHRIS

Come on, I just decided, you and me, we're going to ride on a dinosaur.

He grabs him off the desk, drops him to the floor and, pulling him along, they start out the door.

Nan is nonplused, bugged, pissed off and in general freaked that the man she's trying to hustle is running away with her son.

NAN

What about lunch?

CHRIS

Take it out of petty cash.

He's out the door. She's still yelling.

NAN

Where are you going?

CHRIS

Cloud CooCoo Land!

NAN

When will you be back?

CHRIS

When he runs out of steam.

And they rush through the bank, out the door and are gone. Nan slams the door and as it hits, we:

CUT TO:

143 CLOUD COOCOO LAND—LIMBO

A horizonless plane, stretching off to the other side of yesterday. Large paper cutouts (origami) in the shapes of people and animals and dreams clutter the landscape. A movie cartoon is silently running against the darkness. To the left side of the frame a Charles Eames pixie structure of glass and brass and stone turns slowly, revolving, showing multifacets of itself. A small, very modernistic carousel with dinosaurs instead of horses turns on the right side of the scene. There are musics. Various musics. Nine or twelve kinds of musics. And everything is shot softly, because everything is blue and tall and jelly. This is the place you used to visit before you got older and you got so goddamned smart you knew such places never existed. Cloud CooCoo Land. And here come Chris and Joey, running.

JOEY

Follow me!

CHRIS

Hey, this isn't where I thought we were going!

JOEY

What do you wanna be when you grow up, Uncle Chris?

CHRIS

A cowboy!

JOEY

A fireman!

CHRIS

A fighter pilot!

Joey stops suddenly and whirls on Chris. Chris almost bumps into him. CAMERA MOVES INTO CLOSE TWO-SHOT as Joey scolds Chris with a wagging finger.

JOEY

Now you gotta stop that, Uncle Chris. No war toys!

CHRIS (chagrined)

I forgot.

JOEY

'Cause if you do that, we can't let you stay here.

CHRIS

I'm sorry, Joey. It won't happen again.

Joey considers for a moment, decides Chris is sincere, and smiles. He then dashes off toward the Eames glass structure.

144 ON CHRIS & JOEY—AS SEEN IN MIRRORS

THROUGH CAMERA TECHNIQUE they are distorted. Chris is short and squat the way he would be seen in a funhouse mirror. Joey is tall and thin the same way. But when they pose in front of the Eames glass structure Joey is normal-size and dressed like a Musketeer. Chris is a knight in golden armor. They dash around to one facet after another and as they do the reflections show Joey as Uncle Sam, an astronaut, as a surgeon in smock and mask; Chris shows up as a pirate, Huckleberry Finn, as a caveman. They laugh and caper. Then the rain starts to fall. Blue rain.

CHRIS

What's that?

JOEY

The waters of Lethe.

CHRIS

To forget.

JOEY

Yeah.

CHRIS

What is it the waters want us to forget?

JOEY

Atlantis.

CHRIS

That was just a legend, Joey.

JOEY

So is the Presidency. Doesn't keep people from voting.

CHRIS

So if it was real, why should we forget it?

JOEY

Because they blew it. They had their chance, and they blew it. Now all that's left is the water...

(beat)

...and that...

He points. Chris turns to look where Joey is pointing: off between the paper structures a mist is rolling in. There is something there, beyond the paperwork...something massive, dark, in Earth-colors. Chris looks unsettled, nervous. Even frightened. Joey seems older, as though he is becoming the adult as Chris becomes the child.

CHRIS

What is that place?

JOEY

Atlantis. Gone now.

CHRIS

I don't like that, Joey. We ought to go someplace else.

JOEY

There isn't anyplace else, Uncle Chris.

(The way he says "Uncle Chris" is peculiar. As if an older man were addressing a younger man, with irony.)

145 MED. SHOT—THROUGH MIST FROM MOTHER

CLOSE BEHIND CHRIS'S MOTHER through the mist to Chris and Joey. As we HOLD, Joey taps Chris on the arm and points toward Chris's Mother. Chris turns and looks across through the mist (with Atlantis in b.g.) at her.

146 ON CHRIS

staring across the landscape to the mist bank rolling in, staring at the woman in the flowing crimson robe who stands there, watching them, her hair billowing.

CHRIS

Who's that, Joey?

JOEY

Don't you know her?

CHRIS

I—I don't think so...

They walk toward the woman. As they get nearer, Chris realizes it is his MOTHER.

JOEY

Now you know her.

CHRIS (nodding)

Mom? Mom, is that you?

She does not answer, she merely looks at him. Now Chris knows it's her; she has an expression painted on her face of incredible loneliness and sadness; he moves toward her faster.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Mom! What are you doing here?

(beat)

Hey, Mom.

She starts to move away through the mist toward the merry-go-round. Chris rushes after her, yelling at her.

CHRIS (CONT'D.) (angrily)

Momma, don't run away. Stay and talk to me, I want to ask you a lot of things. Momma! Please don't run away...you never talked to me... for Christ's sake, talk to me now...

He chases her, running full-out, but somehow, without seeming to move at all hurriedly, she outdistances him easily and reaches the merry-go-round and gets aboard. It continues going around and around, and he yells even when she's on the out-of-sight side. But she comes back around and he harangues her.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

He never had a damned thing to say to me. You and he...a closed corporation, no room for me...goddam it, get off there...talk to me...

The carousel carrying his Mother goes around, and when it comes back in front of him, she has vanished from the animal whereon she

rode.

147 SHOT THRU PAPER FIGURES TO CHRIS

PAST THE MERRY-GO-ROUND AS THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON HIS FACE and he realizes she has gone. He rushes around the carousel as CAMERA HOLDS ON HIM and he searches wildly for her. He is half-crazed. But she's gone. He starts knocking over the paper figures, running amuck. Joey comes around the carousel and just stands and watches. Finally, Chris slumps down, exhausted, and sobs with great heaving dry-gulps of air (not crying), his head in his arms. Joey comes over and touches his shoulder.

JOEY

That won't do any good, Uncle Chris.

He soothes Chris for a long moment, then helps him get to his feet. They stand there silently as the following things happen:

A blind, spavined, swaybacked white horse stumbles through.

A dead black bird with enormous wingspread flutters to the ground, and leaves scatter down to shroud it.

A white rabbit wearing a weskit and spats hurries past looking at a turnip watch on the end of a gold chain.

JOEY (CONT'D.)

We're gonna have to go soon, Uncle Chris. You wanna ride on the dinosaurs before we go?

They walk to the merry-go-round that is turning slowly. They climb on a pair of brontosauri and Chris looks sad, crestfallen, weary, hopeless, lost.

JOEY (CONT'D.) (with a very adult voice that is unlike his child voice)
Do you know what killed the dinosaurs, Chris?

Chris shakes his head.

JOEY (CONT'D.)

Men killed them.

CHRIS

That isn't true. Men came millions of years after the dinosaurs had disappeared.

JOEY

Men came and touched them with metal fingertips, and a blue blight spread across their skins and they died.

CHRIS

Is that true?

JOEY

Yes.

CHRIS

Let's go home, Joey. I don't want to stay here any more.

They get off the dinosaurs and start to walk away.

148 MED. SHOT—TO CHRIS & JOEY

THRU THE MIST as they walk toward CAMERA.

JOEY (in adult voice)

Now what do you want to be when you grow up, Chris?

CHRIS

Quiet. Just very quiet.

JOEY

That's good, Chris.

As these last lines are spoken they walk past the CAMERA and the mist and fog swirl up, obscuring the landscape as we:

CUT TO:

as Chris walks through with Joey in his arms, asleep. Nan sits in front of the desk, checking some papers. The office is lit so that the headlines on the walls stand out in bold relief. Chris stops, looks around as though he is becoming reoriented, then lays Joey down on the sofa. Nan gets up and comes to them.

NAN

Where were you so long?

CHRIS

Why do you tell him you're working late when you don't have to?

NAN

I don't know what you mean.

CHRIS

There's nothing between us, Nan.

She retreats behind a standard feminine ploy. The other person is paranoid, she knows nothing about the subject.

NAN

Who ever said there was?

CHRIS

Stop it, Nan.

NAN (angrily)

You come back here after a day God knows where, with my son, and suddenly start badgering me.

CHRIS

He needs a father, Nan.

She stares at him with shock.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

And I'm not him.

She turns away, gets herself together. Then turns back and offers him the papers on which she's been working.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Forget those.

(beat)

I'll see about getting you a new job tomorrow.

NAN (shocked, then regaining poise)

I can get my own jobs, thank you.

CHRIS

As you choose.

She starts for the door, remembers Joey; goes to him, gathers him up and goes back to door.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

He's a special kid, Nan; don't kill him.

She stares at him with what must be a destroying mixture of love, hate, loss, and confusion. Then she goes. Chris stands for a moment, then goes to his desk and slumps into the seat. He reaches up to click off the desk light and stops as WE HEAR THE SOUND OF RAIN (like the blue rain in Cloud CooCoo Land) OVER. He looks tense and possibly frightened for a moment, then he clicks off the desk lamp, throwing the room into deep shadow just one tone off total darkness, and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

150 CITIZEN KANE FOOTAGE—(STOCK B&W)—(MEASURE)

We run sufficient footage from this Orson Welles classic to provide counterpoint to the DIALOGUE OVER. An attempt should be made to synchronize the speaking action of the stock footage with the

dialogue. The scenes from the film show Welles, as Charles Foster Kane, arriving at a dust-covered New York newspaper he has just purchased. Action should open with Welles, Joseph Cotten and Everett Sloane pulling up in front of the building in a hansom cab pulled by horse, followed by a dray wagon filled with household goods and Sloane perched atop the wagon's load. Welles and Cotten go up the stairs into the building and encounter the old, inept, custom-bound editor.

INTERCUT THIS STOCK FOOTAGE WITH DIALOGUE OVER

CHRIS (from the mouth of Welles)

We're not getting the right kind of press. Things like that Dow business only get people more uptight.

SANDI (from Cotten's mouth)

You have to educate people, Mr. Stopa. It's become a cliché, but it's still an answer.

CHRIS (from Welles)

I've got to get to the mass media.

SANDI, as we will see when we intercut with present action, is Chris's new secretary—an older woman than Nan but still young: sensible shoes, longer skirt, glasses, more professional and obviously quite intelligent.

SANDI (from Cotten)

So you buy the Los Angeles Free Press and you have your own newspaper and you can say what you think needs to be said.

CHRIS (from Welles)

No good. That's just the thing I shouldn't do.

(beat)

If I use a hip magazine or an underground newspaper it's just more freaky doubletalk for the Silent Majority. And they never see those papers anyhow.

(beat)

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

No. What I've got to buy is something that's above reproach. Something they believe in, something they can't doubt...

All through the preceding DIALOGUE OVER (out of the mouths of Welles and Cotten) the Citizen Kane footage has unreeled. Now, Welles and Cotten should be entering the building as Sandi's worried voice comes from Joseph Cotten's mouth:

SANDI

Mr. Stopa, you don't mean...

151 INTERCUT (COLOR)

LONG SHOT—READER'S DIGEST BUILDING—PLEASANTVILLE, N.Y.
(STOCK) ANGLE ON SIGN

PLEASANTVILLE, N.Y.

population X,000

Home of the

READER'S DIGEST

CUT BACK TO:

152 CITIZEN KANE FOOTAGE (STOCK B&W)

As Welles and Cotten come into the editorial bay of the old newspaper, we:

CUT TO:

153 EDITORIAL BAY OF READER'S DIGEST—DAY

As Chris and Sandi come through the swinging doors, we see the staff lined up. It looks like admissions day at Sun City. About ten of the oldest, most withered, stooped, crepuscular old farts ever gathered in one room. Chris looks around. There are oxygen inhalators on the walls at strategic locations. They are all dressed with celluloid collars, wing-coats, dresses down to their calves, buns, wire-frame glasses,

hearing aids, vests, even a pair of spats and a wheelchair case or two. Chris looks at them. They look at Chris.

154 STAFF'S POV—ON CHRIS & SANDI

He is dressed in the height of outrageous fashion. A symphony in florals, pastels, bell-bottoms, leather and other alien elements.

155 HOW CHRIS SEES THEM

a multitude of gravestones.

156 HOW THEY SEE CHRIS & SANDI

Attila the Hun and Irma La Douce.

157 ON CHRIS & SANDI—CLOSEUP

as he leans toward her and whispers.

CHRIS

We're liable to be beaten to death by crutches.

SANDI

If we aren't gummed to death first.

CAMERA PULLS BACK to draw the battle lines fully.

158 SLANT-ANGLE SHOT—ACROSS DIGEST STAFF

as they rank, almost like ragged troops. One paunchy, tweedledum

man with high celluloid collar, a mass of neatly parted (in the middle) white hair and the air of a praying mantis who has just been informed the female of the species eats its mate after coitus, steps forward obsequiously. This is MR. LIGHTFOOT, the editor.

LIGHTFOOT

Mr. Stopa...?

Chris smiles a trifle nervously, and half-raises a hand in a tentative hello.

LIGHTFOOT (CONT'D.)

Welcome to you, sir. I bid you most hearty welcome on behalf of the several thousand employees of the Reader's Digest, only a loyal few of whom you see here.

CHRIS

Uh, thank you, Mr. uh—

LIGHTFOOT (hobbles across to shake hands)

Oh, yes, of course. I am Jeeter Lightfoot, your editor, sir.

Chris shakes hands, then goes stalking about, shaking hands with the old folks. Sandi is measuring things with a tape measure: walls, desks, available area, height of people. Lightfoot is trying to orient himself, answering Sandi and Chris all at the same time, as they speak to him one atop the other. His answers frequently aren't to the right question. He is obviously getting more muddled and more frightened and outraged by the moment.

CHRIS

Pleased to meet you, pleased to meet you, pleased to meet you...Mr. Lightfoot...

SANDI

We'll need to clear out these filing cabinets to put in the new editorial cubicle...Mr. Lightfoot...

LIGHTFOOT

(answering both at once, spinning and whirling to bring each one into focus as the next speaks)

~~Yes, Mr. Stop?~~
~~Cubicle (beat) binets?~~
~~The Miss~~
~~But you can't~~
~~Mr. Wilbert~~—

159 ON SWINGING DOORS

as they burst open and a dozen wildly dressed young writers, male and female, erupt into the bay. They don't even recognize the battle lines. They start setting up portable typewriters on desks, making phone calls, politely edging past wheelchair cases to get at desks. The place is suddenly infiltrated by a gaggle of busily working writers. The old folks spin and whirl as they watch. One old lady sits down and starts to cry.

160 FULL SHOT WITH CHRIS IN F.G.

taking it all in. He frowns. Suddenly he puts two fingers in his mouth and lets out a shrieking whistle. Everybody freezes.

CHRIS

Listen, you creeps, stop shoving these people around. They are your co-workers, can y'dig it?

(beat, softer)

I want you to be polite to them, and work with them, not over them. Now let me hear some agreement.

The hippie writers all nod yes and there are AD LIB murmurs of "Sorry" and "Okay, Chris" and "It won't happen again."

161 MR. LIGHTFOOT

He is looking at Chris in a new way.

162 TWO-SHOT—CHRIS & LIGHTFOOT

as Chris comes to him.

CHRIS

Mr. Lightfoot, is there an office where we can talk?

LIGHTFOOT

Oh, yes, to be sure, sir. My office is right over here.

With his arm around Lightfoot's shoulder, Chris and the old man walk to an office and Lightfoot holds the door for him. Chris urges Lightfoot to precede him.

163 INT. MR. LIGHTFOOT'S OFFICE

Spare, sparse, Spartan. Very clean. A pot of rhododendrons on the bookcase. A board with the blue-line dummies for the next few issues is very large and very prominent.

CHRIS

I'm sorry about that out there, Mr. Lightfoot. I want you to know right off that no one here is going to be fired. I think you've all been doing a great job here at the Digest.

LIGHTFOOT (astounded)

You do? Thank you, sir.

CHRIS

And nothing's going to change here. I want you to keep right on producing the same sort of magazine you've been producing for the last nine hundred years.

LIGHTFOOT

Oh, it hasn't been nearly that long, sir. The Digest initiated publication in Nineteen—

CHRIS

Right. That's fine, Mr. Lightfoot. Everything is going to be the same except...

LIGHTFOOT (warily)

Except...?

Chris walks over to the layouts of the forthcoming issues and stares at them carefully, talks over his shoulder.

CHRIS

Except each issue there'll be one or two carefully researched articles my own staff will contribute.

(beat)

Like here, for instance, in the next issue.

He points to a square on the layout.

CHRIS

This article you have scheduled—the one called “How to Convert Your Medicine Chest into a Spare Room”—we'll be replacing it with a new piece.

LIGHTFOOT

A new piece?

CHRIS

Yeah. “The Brutal Truth About Police Brutality.”

Mr. Lightfoot sinks quickly into a chair. His expression could be said to parallel that on the face of a resident of either Sodom or Gomorrah, just after the leavetaking of Lot and the advent of the wrath of the Lord. Let's hold on that expression, as we:

CUT TO:

or similar footage from “Sodom and Gomorrah” or one of the other spectaculars showing the earth opening and swallowing whole cities, volcanoes, falling buildings, mass destruction. The usual happy times as an era comes to an end.

CUT TO:

165 SUBLIMINAL SHOT—THE CABAL

This is a shot that will be repeated from this point on, with frequency. The shot is of twelve men, all in the mold of Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago or H.L. Hunt, sitting in obscenely overstuffed chairs around a low, highly polished conference table. Shadows. Eerie feeling. Bad vibes. There is a dominant color in the room and in its appointments: an unsettling, nerve-jarring, iridescent purple impregnated in the walls, in the leather of the chairs, in the undertone of their clothes, in the subterranean light that suffuses the room: the purple of things that live in the Maracot Deep. THIS SHOT FLASHES ON AND OFF SO QUICKLY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHAT WE HAVE SEEN, THOUGH IT HAS BEEN PRINTED INDELIBLY ON THE RETINA OF THE VIEWER’S EYE. EACH SUCCEEDING FLASH WILL LAST A FEW INSTANTS LONGER, TILL ON THE FIFTH OR SIXTH FLASHING WE CAN MAKE OUT WHAT IT IS.

CUT TO:

166 HIGH ANGLE—DAY

SHOT OPENS high in the air, halfway across Manhattan. On a direct line with the 40th-floor window of a faraway skyscraper. CAMERA ZOOMS IN SLOWLY on the building. In VOICE OVER we HEAR CHRIS and the NBC network head, ROTSLER. CAMERA KEEPS MOVING IN on building all through dialogue.

CHRIS

What’s the worst viewing time during the day for you? Financially.

ROTSLER

Ten-thirty to noon, weekdays.

CHRIS

Bad, is it?

ROTSLER

Deadly.

CHRIS

I want to buy a year's worth.

ROTSLER

For what purpose?

CHRIS

A series of three hundred and sixty-five programs.

ROTSLER

What kind of programs, Mr. Stopa?

CHRIS

News, of a sort.

LAP-DISSOLVE THRU WINDOW TO:

. 167 INT. ROTSLEER'S OFFICE—DAY

thru

172

CAMERA KEEPS MOVING THRU ROOM on a straight line for the window at the far end. The office is incredibly long, well-lit, bright, with a minimum of furniture. At the far end, near the window, are two easy chairs with Chris and Rotsler in them. A desk, some potted plants. VOICES OVER CONTINUE as CAMERA MOVES DOWN LENGTH OF ROOM toward window.

ROTSLER

We have a good many news programs.

CHRIS

Not like this. I intend to present exposés of pressing problems, graft, corruption.

ROTSLER

And what about the lawsuits?

CHRIS

We run a disclaimer. NBC is not responsible. I'll take full responsibility for every show. You can write it into the contract.

(beat)

I'll pay prime-time rates.

ROTSLER (beat)

Just what product are you trying to sell, Mr. Stopa?

CHRIS

The truth.

ROTSLER

The truth?

CHRIS

I'm sure you've heard of it; it's been in all the papers.

CAMERA LAP-DISSOLVES OUT WINDOW after passing directly between Chris and Rotsler without even slowing down. As the lap is effected, we pass from day to night and CAMERA MOVES ACROSS NEW YORK in the darkness and heads for a skyscraper far off across the city, as the VOICES CONTINUE OVER.

The voices are Chris and NOAH SHERMAN, talking in the penthouse restaurant of that building toward which we're slowly ZOOMING.

NOAH

Why hire me? I'm not exactly the hottest newsman on television.

CHRIS

Noah Sherman is still a good name.

NOAH

It was ten years ago.

CHRIS

A lot of people equate it with honest reportage.

NOAH

That's why I can't work these days.

CHRIS

You'll work. You'll be the hottest thing since Edward R. Murrow.

NOAH

Did you ever work in P.R., Mr. Stopa?

CHRIS

Ten-thirty to eleven-thirty every morning, Noah, you are going to pull the teeth of the tigers.

NOAH

And just how do I manage that?

CHRIS

You'll have a full-time staff of researchers, snoopers, undercover bugs and informants who'll pry up every rock.

NOAH

You want to get me killed.

During preceding DIALOGUE OVER, CAMERA has come on straight line across town to ZOOM IN SLOWLY on the skyscraper. On the penthouse restaurant. LAP-DISSOLVE THRU HUGE WINDOW into restaurant and down central aisle toward the table near the far window at the other end of the restaurant where Chris and NOAH SHERMAN are eating. DIALOGUE CONTINUES as CAMERA PASSES BETWEEN THEM (as it did with Chris and Rotsler, giving impression of one long shot across town through buildings).

CHRIS

You'll also have bodyguards.

NOAH

Give me six and they can double as pallbearers.

CHRIS

I personally guarantee within three months you'll have your withered
kisser on the front of Time and Newsweek.

NOAH

Will my wife come back to me?

CHRIS

Why'd she leave you?

NOAH

I fell from grace.

CHRIS

Let's save the nation, Noah, then we'll worry about your sex life.

CAMERA PAST THEM, and LAP-DISSOLVE THRU WINDOW and pass
from NIGHT TO DAY AND NIGHT TO DAY AGAIN and head off
toward the Hudson River and LAP-DISSOLVE THRU to LOS ANGELES
as we HEAR VOICE OVER of Chris, BITSY (a chick) and NOAH ON TV.
Keep going with the CAMERA across L.A. to Chris's house and LAP-
DISSOLVE THRU his bedroom window.

BITSY

C'mon, Chris, wake up, watch Noah Sherman with me.

CHRIS

Wanna sleep. Go 'way.

BITSY

But he's the hottest thing on TV since Edward R. Murrow.

CHRIS

I know! I know!

Big bed. Not too fancy, but with overflowing bookcases built into the headboard, and a TV set attached to the countertop of the footboard. Chris is sacked out, trying to sleep, one hand thrown over his eyes, naked as far as we can see to the point where the blankets cover him. Beside him in the bed is a great-looking brunette, Bitsy, watching the TV and eating chocolate pudding. On the TV set Noah is at his newsdesk. There is a phone beside him with a red light on it.

NOAH (FILTER)

You'll be pleased to know that as a result of our January 23rd show, the Grand Jury in Cleveland has brought indictments against all seven members of the city planning commission.

(beat)

The lawsuit brought against this reporter and this program by the mayor and the City of Chicago has been thrown out of court.

(beat)

And today we'll talk about lead in your gasoline...and anti-trust collusion.

The red light blinks on the phone.

NOAH (FILTER) (CONT'D.)

Excuse me a moment, please. This ought to be the Attorney General of the United States.

(picks up phone)

Good morning, sir. Yes, I know it's a little early...

He reaches over and with some difficulty pulls into the shot an enormous stack of files and reports.

NOAH (FILTER) (CONT'D.)

...this is Noah Sherman and I think my researchers have come up with something you may want to act upon, sir.

(beat)

Is your television set on, sir?

174 ON CHRIS—BITSY & TV IN B.G.

as the telephone in the headboard goes off. It rings several times but Bitsy is immersed in what Noah is saying, which we hear OVER at first, but which fades into b.g. when Chris reluctantly crawls up and grabs the phone.

NOAH'S VOICE (FILTER)

This stack of reports proves collusion between the eight largest oil companies and the four major automobile manufacturers to suppress a lead-free gasoline that would help end automobile pollution—until the car makers can re-tool for models that will use a lead-free combustion system...

DESK SERGEANT (FILTER) (V.O.)

Mr. Christopher Stopa, please.

CHRIS (sleepily)

Yeah?

DESK SERGEANT (FILTER) (V.O.)

Christopher Stopa?

CHRIS

Yeah, right. Who's this?

DESK SERGEANT (FILTER) (V.O.)

This is the Desk Sergeant at the Santa Monica Police Station. We have a party here who asked us to call you—says she used to work for you.

CHRIS

Who?

DESK SERGEANT (FILTER) (V.O.)

Sutherland. Miss Nancy Bernice Sutherland. She had one call; she asked to have it put through to you.

Chris swings his legs out from under the blankets, his lap still covered, feet on floor. Bitsy and TV dialogue continue fuzzy in b.g.

CHRIS (alert now)

What's she in for?

DESK SERGEANT (FILTER) (V.O.)

Trying to rent a car with a stolen credit card.

CHRIS

I'll have a bail bondsman down there within the hour.

DESK SERGEANT (FILTER) (V.O.)

Hold on. There's also a hundred and sixty-five dollars in unpaid traffic citations against her. You'll have to bring a hundred and sixty-five dollars cash if you want to get her out.

175 LONGER SHOT—TOWARD CHRIS—ACROSS BEDROOM

CHRIS

Okay.

DESK SERGEANT (FILTER) (V.O.)

What should I tell her?

CHRIS

Tell her to take it easy, it's all getting taken care of.

He hangs up. He gets out of the bed, naked, turning away from camera as he goes to a clothes closet to get dressed. Now Bitsy notices him.

BITSY

Where you goin'?

CHRIS

Bail someone out of the can.

BITSY

At this hour?

(annoyed)

Gawd!

Chris ignores her, starts pulling clothes off hangers. She sits up higher in the bed, crosses her arms with selfish anger.

BITSY (CONT'D.) (snidely)

Come on sleep over, Bitsy, I'll take you to the beach tomorrow.

He pulls on pants and shirt and vest. She is glaring.

BITSY (CONT'D.) (yelling)

Well, say something!

CHRIS

You're spilling chocolate pudding on the bed.

She looks down, sees the custard cup has overturned on the bedspread, gives a snarl and slaps it away from her. It hits the floor and rolls. CAMERA GOES WITH IT and follows it as it hits the door of the bedroom which closes as Chris goes.

CUT TO:

176 INT. JAIL

MIKE YOKUM, the bail bondsman, Chris, and the DESK SERGEANT at the sign-out counter. ANGLE INCLUDES barred door leading to corridor and cells.

YOKUM

Sure, I'll put up the bond on her, Chris. You know I will—but are you sure this is a good idea?

CHRIS

Mike, I can't let her lay up in the slammer like that.

YOKUM

It might be the best thing for her.

CHRIS

What the hell's that mean?

YOKUM

This isn't her first bust, Chris. She's been picked up four times in the last year. Shoplifting, bad checks, and twice for dope.

CHRIS

Not Nan. She worked for me, man. She was straight as an Ohio school-teacher.

DESK SERGEANT

Are you sure we're talking about the same girl, Mr. Stopa?

CHRIS (almost to himself)

Nan's a fine chick. She never hurt anyone. Pretty. Clean looking, like a little kid.

(beat)

It just didn't work out with us, you know. No bad vibes, it just didn't work out.

DESK SERGEANT

That doesn't sound like the girl we've got, Mr. Stopa.

CHRIS

Well, what the hell do you know? They all look the same to you. Just some kind of shit to throw up under a jail. Just let her the hell out of there. I know Nan.

177 SHOT DOWN CELL HALLWAY

through BARS in EXTREME CLOSEUP as something moves toward us in the hall. We see it is a girl being led by a matron. As she comes to the cell door of the hall, the door is unlocked and swings open, and CAMERA PULLS BACK to show us another kind of Nan Sutherland.

DESK SERGEANT (O.S.)

If you want my opinion, Mr. Stopa, she's been pretty heavy behind speed. She may not be the same girl you knew.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I don't want your opinion, friend.

WHAT NAN LOOKS LIKE: worn, weary, sagging. The ankles are swollen from too much water in the system. The face is broken out with ugly sores. The eyes are dead. The dress is dirty, the hair straggly. She is a zombie shadow of the girl who worked as Chris's secretary.

178 CLOSE HOLD ON NAN

so we get a long, ugly look.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Oh Jesus. Jesus Christ God, oh God...

179 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL
purple, evil, that room and those old men...again.

180 CLOSE SHOT ON CHRIS

someone has torn out his heart.

181 ON NAN

182 ON CHRIS—CLOSE TO NAN

CHRIS

Who'll play with Joey now?

and HOLD as we HEAR the SOUND of a GENERATOR RUNNING DOWN with a hideous dying screech and wail like nails on a blackboard as we

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

183 INT. CHRIS'S OFFICE—BANK—DAY

CLOSEUP on rear of Chris's desk chair as it suddenly spins around showing Chris, wild-eyed, in the chair, holding the telephone to his ear.

CHRIS (yelling into phone)

Don't hang up on me Kennerlee, you sonofabitch!

There is an audible CLICK as the connection is broken. Chris slams the phone down, hits the intercom and howls:

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Book me on the next flight to New York and get the car out front. Now!

The door to the office pops open and Sandi, laden down with papers as usual, rushes in. Chris is by this time jamming reports and files into an attaché case. He rips open a drawer and throws shirts and socks from it into the attaché case.

184 CLOSE ON SANDI—TO CHRIS

as he slams drawers in righteous anger, hurling things out of the way as he packs that attaché case.

SANDI

Mr. Stopa, please! If you go to see Mr. Kennerlee with that attitude you'll just—

He stops his spastic movements and plants both hands on the desk in front of him, leaning his weight onto them. He stops her with a glance as hard and uncompromising as *lignum vitae*.

CHRIS

Did I ask you to book me to New York?

SANDI (cowed)

Yessir.

CHRIS

Did I tell you to have my car out front to take me to the airport?

SANDI

Yessir.

CHRIS (soft, but deadly)

Please.

She turns and scampers. Chris finishes his packing and whirls for the door.

185 EXT. BANK—AS CHRIS COMES THROUGH

His limo pulls up in front. He opens the back door, not even waiting for the driver to come around. He throws in the attaché case and is about to climb in when he looks up and sees:

186 THE ZERO GIRL—STREET—DAY

standing there, fifty feet away, staring at him as CAMERA ZOOMS IN on her from CHRIS'S POV. She is lovely, dressed in sensually arresting gear, and she is smiling at him. CAMERA HOLDS SEVERAL BEATS on her then ZOOMS BACK to include Chris as he leans down to say to SOLDIER:

CHRIS

Hold it a minute, Soldier.

He takes two steps toward her, and a hand reaches in from out of the frame and grabs him. He half-spins, fist cocked back to punch and get loose, but as CAMERA ANGLE WIDENS we see it is Frog, again with the tape recorder slung from his shoulder.

FROG

Hey, Chris. I got the sound now.

Chris looks frantically toward the Zero Girl. She is starting to walk away, very, very slowly. He wants to pull loose. Soldier leans out the window.

SOLDIER

Sir. The airport. We'll be cutting it close.

FROG

Hey, Chris, it'll only take a second. This's all our eggs, man.

He looks from Soldier to Frog to the Zero Girl, who is smiling triumphantly because he's being pulled apart by decision. She is farther away now. Chris looks bananas. Then he grabs the ear-mike from Frog.

CHRIS (plug to ear)

Run it out.

Chris stands for a long moment, listening. He begins to nod his head. Finally, he pulls off the earplug. We have not heard the sound.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Okay. You right this time.

FROG (beaming)

You mean it? You'll go the twelve grand to cut the demos?

Chris goes to the front door of the Stopa Bank and sticks his head in.

187 INTERCUT—LONG SHOT

FROM REAR OF BANK ON FRONT DOOR with Chris's head sticking through. He yells at the top of his lungs.

CHRIS

Sanndndiii!

A door opens behind CAMERA and Sandi enters the FRAME.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Come here, baby! Quick!

She dashes toward him.

188 THE STREET

Chris is looking up the street toward where the Zero Girl was walking. She's out of sight now.

CHRIS

No, I'm not going to give you twelve grand so you can cut demos and then sell them to Capitol and lose all the big bread.

CHRIS (CONT'D.) (beat; as Frog looks whipped)

I'm going to give you fifteen thousand.

(beat)

Take the extra three grand and cut finished masters. You can peddle 'em for a better deal than with rough masters.

Sandi emerges. He grabs her hand as she comes through.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Sandi, Frog. Frog, Sandi.

(to her)

I want him to have a fifteen thousand dollar loan, he'll tell you for what. Set it up.

189 INT. LIMOUSINE—ON CHRIS OUTSIDE

as he grabs the door handle and climbs in.

CHRIS (to Soldier)

Okay, Soldier, let's do it.

The car leaps into life and takes off. They speed away so we see Sandi and Frog talking on the sidewalk. Chris keeps looking out the window, and as they pass the Zero Girl, doing sixty, she turns and smiles at him again...

CUT TO:

190 OFFICE OF JIM KENNERLEE—NEW YORK—DAY

A futuristic office with plenty of glass and foam and plastic and see-through furniture.

CLOSE ON CHRIS. As we PULL BACK, he leans across the desk at JIM KENNERLEE.

CHRIS (furious, waving the report under his nose)

What is this, Jim? Just what the hell is this? What the hell do you think you're doing?

KENNERLEE (gently)

Why are you yelling at me, Chris?

CHRIS

Why am I yelling? You're lucky I don't rap you one right in the mouth, man. Just what the hell is this all about?

KENNERLEE

The biggest stock dividend on the market this year, and you want to know what it is?

CHRIS

Don't talk me dumb, Jim. You know what I mean.

KENNERLEE (regains self)

Chris, you bought me out of Rand, and you loaned me money to get started, and you own stock in KenCo, and you're a friend...but I don't have to sit here and let you

(yells)

yell at me, bay-bee!

CHRIS

Why are you making napalm!?!

Kennerlee stares at him dumbfounded. Silence grows between them.

KENNERLEE

Because we underbid Dow and got the contract. One hundred and sixteen million dollars, Chris. That is why we're making napalm.

CHRIS (crazed)

I didn't put you in business to make napalm!

KENNERLEE (flaring again)

Well, ain't that just too god damn bad, what you put me in business to make. Who the hell are you supposed to be? My conscience? I've paid back that lousy loan...with interest!

CHRIS

That isn't what you went into business to manufacture.

KENNERLEE

Chris, what's the matter with you? Our mainstay is still systems

analysis and the nutrient. But we've diversified. We've paid back all outstanding debts and we're high into profit now. What's wrong with that?

CHRIS

That isn't what you went into business for, dammit!

KENNERLEE

Are you telling me I didn't go into business for profit?

CHRIS

I'm telling you you've double-crossed me, man. I didn't bankroll you for napalm!

KENNERLEE

Listen, you lunatic, you may have given me a start, but that doesn't mean you own me. I'm the honcho at KenCo, and you may have laid some money on me for openers, but it was me that did it, baby. It was my ideas and my nutrient.

CHRIS

You sold out!

KENNERLEE

I'm producing what's needed at an honest price. Why are you yelling at me?

CHRIS

Jesus, can't you understand?!?

KENNERLEE

You'd better get out of here, Chris.

CHRIS

You ain't the dream I had, man.

KENNERLEE

Pass on it, Chris. Don't make me have to get it on with you.

(beat)

You didn't buy me, baby. You only rented me. I own my own soul.

As Chris lunges at Kennerlee.

191 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

and then

SUBLIMINAL FLASH AGAIN—THE CABAL

and then

CUT TO:

192 EDITORIAL BAY—READER'S DIGEST—DAY

A LONG PERSPECTIVE SHOT FROM LOW BEHIND CHRIS IN F.G. down the entire bay, with all the hippie kids working like mad, scurrying here and there with galleys, phoning, making paste-ups, doing the everyday work of a national magazine.

CAMERA MOVES WITH CHRIS as he walks down the line, looking... looking...

He stops at a desk and speaks to a HIPPIE CHICK.

CHRIS

Where's the old man?

HIPPIE CHICK

Which old man?

CHRIS

Mr. Lightfoot.

HIPPIE CHICK

Who?

Chris looks around.

CHRIS

Where are all the old people?

HIPPIE CHICK

Oh, them. Reitman fired them all.

CHRIS

Where's Reitman?

HIPPIE CHICK (points)

His office is through there.

(beat; Chris starts for office)

Who was that masked man?

193 SHOT WITH CHRIS

as he stalks through the editorial bay. He comes to the office door that says JACK REITMAN EDITOR and doesn't stop at the secretary, but shoves right through; the door bangs open inside. He leaves it open.

CHRIS

Reitman, who told you to fire the old staff?

REITMAN

Mr. Stopa! Hello!

CHRIS

I asked you a question.

REITMAN

They were getting in the way. We had a time-motion study taken, and believe it or not, Mr. Stopa, we were losing 43.7% efficiency because of those relics.

CHRIS

I left instructions they weren't to be fired. If they got too old to do their jobs they were to be given other, easier jobs.

REITMAN (brightens)

Oh, well, if that's all that's bothering you, sir, we gave them all fine pensions and I understand the bulk of them have settled in a senior-citizens colony in Florida.

CHRIS

Pack it in, Reitman.

REITMAN (startled)

Whu-what?

CHRIS

I'm getting myself a new editor.

REITMAN

Now hold it a minute, Stopa.

CHRIS

Mr. to you, Charlie.

REITMAN

I go, and most of the staff goes with me.

CHRIS

I believe I can live with it.

REITMAN (conciliatory)

Look, you went off and left the Digest with me and the rest of the crew...listen to me!

CHRIS

I'm listening. But not too hard.

REITMAN

...Old Lightfoot couldn't keep up. So I took over and circulation's jumped by seventy percent. Our advertising is up by thirty-six percent.

CHRIS

When was the last time you ran an article that said something?

REITMAN

Mr. Stopa, we know what our readers want to see, and we give it to them.

CHRIS

Yeah, I know what they want, too. They want it all snug and safe and no waves. That isn't why I bought this goddamned magazine.

REITMAN

But we still run articles of a social-conscience nature...liberal pieces... self-help articles...

CHRIS

How old are you, man?

REITMAN (off-balance)

Twenty-six.

CHRIS

I'm going to give you a pension, old man. Go to Florida.

He turns and walks out. Reitman stares through the door. He still doesn't understand. HOLD THRU DOORWAY:

DISSOLVE TO:

194 JED BENFORD'S FURNITURE PLANT—DAY

warehouse room, sunshine-bright from the windows, filled from wall-

to-wall with chairs. Handsome chairs. Very well-built and stylish with a modern cast that will be modern forever. Good chairs. The perfect chair. It is utterly chair and could be nothing but. It invites the buttocks. There are aisles every dozen chairs, and Chris and Jed Benford stroll slowly down an aisle FROM CAMERA, away from us, into the vista of chairs.

CHRIS

Jesus, Jed, you're breaking my heart, man.

BENFORD (wearily)

What else can I do, Chris?

CHRIS (resigned)

Nothing. That's the trouble. Absolutely nothing.

BENFORD

I wanted to make furniture that would last forever. A chair that was so...so chair...so much a chair that if we all got dead and the cockroaches or the grasshoppers took over the planet, a million years from now if they dug it up they'd know it was a chair and what it was for.

Chris stops and runs his hand over the beautifully hand-rubbed surface of one of the chairs. He sinks down into it. Benford slumps into a chair across the aisle from him. It is significant—and should be so apparently—that they cannot keep from sitting in these chairs.

CHRIS

You couldn't know, Jed.

BENFORD

Oh, shit, Chris, I should have suspected, I've been around long enough, I'm not a kid...I should have had some idea!

CHRIS

There's no chance the research is wrong?

Benford looks whipped, beaten, old. He slumps in the chair like a man

of seventy. He spreads his hands.

BENFORD

It's too bizarre to be wrong. No, it's the truth, the final word: the young homemaker, the 20-to-35 age group that buys eighty percent of the furniture in our glorious plastic America, doesn't want furniture that'll last for three hundred years. She wants some piece of borax crap that pops its joints and snaps its back when you lean too hard—something that she can toss out in four years so she can redecorate completely. Built-in obsolescence; they've been brainwashed by fifty years of garbage goods to want knock-off designs. What a mess.

CHRIS

You make good furniture, Jed.

Benford slams the arm of the chair with fury.

BENFORD

Epitaph: here lies Jed Benford, one of the all-time great designers who was too good for his market.

CHRIS

Can you make it if you do the knock-off designs, Jed?

BENFORD (rubs face, wearily)

Yeah, sure...I can make a fortune. If I rap out junk I wouldn't have in my own home.

They sit quietly for a moment. Then Jed speaks softly.

BENFORD

Look, Chris, I'll do whatever you say. You set me up and I said I wanted to do something and that was our deal. I'll understand if you want to jump out.

CHRIS

You've got 1300 people depending on this plant, Jed. The whole town, practically.

BENFORD

.Yeah.

CHRIS

It isn't what we wanted to do...but I understand.

BENFORD

That's what's so fucking pathetic about it. You do understand. We both understand. If you'd get angry or slug me it would make it easier.

CHRIS

Nothing's going to make it easier, baby.

BENFORD

You understand we're going to be mass-producing junk...junk they're going to stiff black people for in the ghetto...rotten borax crap that won't last ten years...so the little plastic homemakers can redec—oh shit...

He gets up, and so does Chris. Chris and he stare at each other for a second, then they hug each other like brothers going off to war to die, and Chris walks back toward CAMERA as Jed Benford slumps back into his chair, and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

195 THE SUPERNATURAL SUPERMARKET

SHOT IN TILTED FOCUS—ELONGATED IMAGES—UNNATURAL

A supermarket lit so brilliantly the colors blind us. Chris—dressed all in white—moves down among the high-stocked shelves and cases of food. All of them are packed to the gunwales with the Gross National Product of the Good Life. There is no one else in the store.

SAVE WHERE INDICATED THERE IS NO SOUND IN THIS SCENE

At the end of an aisle, he sees THE ZERO GIRL dressed in crimson, as

was his mother. He runs after her. She vanishes around a corner of the cases. He sees her far down at another aisle's end. He goes after her again. And again she eludes him, all in silence. The chase goes on until he sees her disappearing through a swinging door at the rear of the market, leading to the stockrooms. He races after her as CAMERA GOES WITH ARRIFLEX.

He slams through the swinging door and sees the huge wooden port of the freezer compartment swinging shut.

He walks up to it as the heavy latch falls.

He wrestles with it, pulls it open, and steps inside.

196 INSIDE THE FREEZER—CHRIS'S POV—WHAT HE SEES

A huge block of ice, tinged a deep purple in color. And frozen in the ice is the naked body of Nan's son, JOEY. Now there is sound.

CHRIS (anguished)

Joeeeeeeeey!!!!

197 ANOTHER ANGLE

as Chris grabs up an ice pick and starts frantically trying to cut the child out of the ice. He hacks and hacks, wildly, as chips fly, and everything goes more hazily purple and faint...all in silence...as we:

LAP-DISSOLVE THRU TO:

198 PENTHOUSE APARTMENT OF DENISE PETRA—NIGHT

Chris is standing in the French windows leading out onto the terrace. There are purple drapes and they swirl around him that MATCH-DISSOLVE WITH THE PURPLE of the ice in scene preceding. As the preceding scene fades out completely, Chris turns as he speaks, still enmeshed in the wind-swirled drapes.

CHRIS

I don't know what the hell is happening. It's not that it's falling apart financially...Kennerlee is getting rich, Jed Benford can make it, Noah's doing great on TV...but...

199 FULL SHOT—DENISE'S APARTMENT

as she steps out of shadow. There is no comparison between her and the Zero Girl, yet the linkage between the scene preceding and this scene should be apparent.

DENISE

You never struck me as naive. A bit too altruistic, perhaps, but hardly naive.

She whirls to a sofa and sits down, drink in hand. Chris comes out from the curtains. He walks around the apartment straightening pictures that are crooked on the walls. They never really look at each other.

CHRIS (throwaway)

Nobody's perfect.

DENISE

Not even God?

CHRIS

Never met the gentleman.

DENISE

Try the mirror in the bathroom.

Chris stops, turns and stares at her.

DENISE (CONT'D.) (amused)

Oh, come on, Chris, don't tell me you didn't like playing God with everyone. Setting me and the others up. Turning that muckraker Noah Sherman loose, doing Dow the way you did, all of it...

(teasing)

...come on, just a little bit of God, huh?

CHRIS

Don't be insulting.

DENISE

You're going to try and convince me the word "God" never went through your sweet little head.

CHRIS (emphatically)

No!

(beat)

Well...

(quits)

Yeah. Okay. But only to get things done.

DENISE

Why you? Who are you?

CHRIS

Shit...why Lenny Bruce? Why Malcolm X? Why Martin Luther King? Why anybody? They just found themselves there...and I found myself there.

DENISE

And look what happened to them.

CHRIS

I don't plan to get zapped.

DENISE

Neither did they.

CHRIS

Look, I didn't ask for this. If I had my way I'd sit on my fat ass out in

the boonies and kiss the flowers.

DENISE (amused)

Oh, Chris, please. I can't take it. You like the role too much.

CHRIS (getting angry)

Are you trying to piss me off on purpose for some special reason?

DENISE

Chris, darling; my dear darling Christopher. I owe you a great deal. You've made me a very successful woman; I'm hardly out to get you angry.

CHRIS (preoccupied)

God.

DENISE

It's just that you're terribly amusing when you begin to complain that people have acted like people.

CHRIS

They're not doing what they started out to do.

DENISE

They're not doing what you wanted them to do.

CHRIS

What they wanted to do!

DENISE (suddenly)

I'm really quite exhausted, Chris. Can we forget dinner tonight? I'll see you next week perhaps.

He stares at her, his jaw muscles jump, and then he turns to go, grabbing up his jacket from the sofa. He starts for the door.

DENISE (CONT'D.) (sadly, softly and with compassion; not bitchy)

There but for the grace of God...goes God.

Chris seems not to have heard. He opens the door and exits.

CUT TO:

200 THE HOUSEBOAT—DAY

Chris walking across the daisy field to the houseboat we saw earlier.
Chris passes through the doorway.

201 INT. HOUSEBOAT—SLOWER MOTION—DAY

as Chris comes in with sun behind him, and people we have seen earlier slowly rise and gather around him with instant love; they put their arms around him, hug him; they become one living piece of statuary, with their feeling for Chris evident in the stately pavane of affection.

LAP-DISSOLVE THRU TO:

202 HOUSEBOAT—NIGHT

almost a replay of the earlier scenes in which Chris was a part of their group. They all sit around and smoke and talk. There is a hushed, serious quality about their conversation, and from the outset we get a feeling that though Chris is one of them, something has changed. All is not as it was.

CHRIS

It's all going sour.

NORMAN

Like how, Chris?

The scene is very hazy, very pastel. Except for Chris, whose colors are stark, harder, more brilliant. Out-of-key with the mellow surrounding coloration.

CHRIS

When I left and went back to the Bank, I wanted to change things...to make them better. But it's been two years, and it's the same. Except

now all the people I grubstaked are the ones with the power.

203 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

204 BACK TO SCENE

DONNIE, who was Chris's girl earlier, is now with ACHMED.

DONNIE

Where's Frog? And Nan?

CHRIS (sadly)

Gone.

(going through changes)

Christ, it's lonely.

ACHMED

It always is, man. You knew that.

STUART

It's lonely here, too, Chris.

CHRIS

Yeah, but here we had each other. You still do. It's lonelier being alone than with somebody else.

DONNIE

You look a lot more tired, Chris. Didn't you find an old lady to make it easier?

CHRIS

Nothing makes it any easier. I tell you, I don't know what the hell is happening. It's all turning to shit.

(beat)

I want to hit someone, but I don't know who.

They are looking at him differently now. The photography intensifies—the houseboat people softer, more pastel, hazier—Chris now standing out in more solid, vibrant colors, harsher. Several beats of silence go by, then:

CHRIS (CONT'D.) (softly)

I want to come back.

There is the LOUD SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING O.S. It stops.

ACHMED (finally)

You can't.

THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN O.S., LOUD. They stare at him silently.

Darkness begins to crowd in on Chris till we see no one but him as the light draws in on him, contracts, contracts, leaves him in a tiny nubbin of bright light, then winks out, as:

205 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

FRAME GOES TO BLACK

206 BLACK FRAME

in the darkness we HEAR the PHONE RINGING. It rings and rings, and finally the SOUND OF PHONE BEING LIFTED. Frame still black.

CHRIS'S VOICE

Hello.

ELECTRONIC VOICE

We'd like to see you, Mr. Stopa.

CHRIS'S VOICE

We? Who?

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Myself and a few friends of mine.

CHRIS'S VOICE

Do I know you?

207 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

hold for several beats longer.

208 BLACK FRAME AGAIN

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Yes, you know us, Mr. Stopa.

CHRIS'S VOICE

What do you want?

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Stars and suns and everything in between, Mr. Stopa. You'll like talking to us.

CHRIS'S VOICE

Where are you?

ELECTRONIC VOICE

We'll come to pick you up.

EXT. BLACK FRAME

The blackness becomes a car window as CAMERA PULLS BACK. A window in a Rolls Royce—a window with steel shutters so it is impossible to see who is in it. CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM CAR.

209 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE—LATE DAY

under a brooding sky. The Rolls turns off a highway and circles up a winding drive, and in the near distance we see a massive house, something almost modern gothic. Sunk to its knees in the hillside. A large grassy sward lies before the house, very green, very lush, very imposing. And the dark house with its massive doorway at the top of the sward...waiting. The Rolls drives up and stops in front of the house.

210 CLOSEUP ON CAR

as the rear door CLICKS and opens silently. Chris sits in the rear. We cannot see if there is a driver. The partition between passenger and driver is as dark as the windows. Chris has obviously not opened the car door. But now he gets out, and CAMERA MOVES AROUND HIM as he stares up the steps to the great carved door. He walks up the steps. Behind him there is a second CLICK and he turns to see the Rolls, door now closed, gliding away with absolutely no sound. He turns back to the door. It opens with no one behind it. He walks to it.

211 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

longer hold on this.

212 INTO HALLWAY—DARK MANSION

Chris stares in LONG PERSPECTIVE SHOT into the hall. It is musty with landed wealth. This house has stood here for centuries, even before it was built. There have always been houses like this. The sanctums of the great. It is hung and accoutred with massive elegance, but with a grim foreboding. He steps through.

213 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

we can almost pick out specifics in this hold.

214 WITH CHRIS

as he walks down the long carpeted hallway. There are a thousand doors around him, but all are pulled secretively, silently shut. He continues walking, sees sculpture of an ancient and faintly disturbing sort. Paintings from Hieronymus Bosch and Heinrich Kley and the more mad impressionists. He walks toe-and-heel toward a black oak door at the end of the hallway.

215 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

longer hold.

216 WITH CHRIS AT THE DOOR

as he reaches out and grasps the handle in the shape of a screaming eagle. He starts to shove the door inward.

217 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

But this time we HOLD THE SHOT. HOLD IT TIGHTLY as a door in one wall opens and Chris steps into this shot we have seen so many, many times. He comes in and the old men are in their deep, heavy chairs. Fat they are, and old. And evil. There is no doubt what they mean to the world. They are the CABAL. There is dust in the room. Dust that rises lazily in an absence of air movement. But—there is wealth here, too. And most of all there is power. Vast power. Incalculable. Omnipresent. The most evil of them all, at the head of the table, speaks:

HUNTER

You see, Mr, Stopa: we weren't too difficult to locate, were we?

218 ANOTHER ANGLE—FROM HUNTER

Chris stands at the door.

HUNTER

Please close the door and come sit down, Mr. Stopa.

Chris closes the door, but he stays there, as if he cannot bring himself to go and occupy the one very prominently empty chair at the table.

219 INTERCUT

The empty chair. As if sighing deeply, it waits to absorb Chris. There is an ominousness about that chair.

220 ANGLE

Chris stays near the door. Hunter laughs lightly.

HUNTER

Very well.

(beat)

My name is Hunter, Mr. Stopa. And these are Mr. Trunk, Mr. Fyfe, Mr. Keeler, Mr. Throat, Mr. Gold, Mr. Grossman and—well there is a good deal of time for all of us to become close friends.

Chris says nothing.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

You look unsettled, sir. You want to know who we are.

(beat)

We are them, Mr. Stopa.

(beat)

Oh, surely you know. The ones of whom you always speak when you say “They are out to get us,” or “They run things.”

(beat)

Are you sure you wouldn’t like to sit down?

Chris hangs at the door. The other men of the Cabal say nothing. Their little pig eyes watch.

221 INTERCUT BETWEEN CHRIS & HUNTER

HUNTER

As you choose.

(beat)

Surprised, are you, Mr. Stopa? Oh, surely no more of a shock than what has become of your program to reshape the world.

Chris looks as though he’s about to say something, but he doesn’t. Hunter pauses, waiting, then goes on.

HUNTER(CONT’D.)

You have a question? No? Ah...well.

(beat)

Of course there are men who run the world, Mr. Stopa. There always have been, and certainly as long as we live there always will be.

(beat)

Freedom and equality are mutually contradictory, Mr. Stopa. As long as men are free, the strong and quick will always have their way.

(beat)

We are foursquare for freedom.

222 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE EAGLE DOORKNOB

223 ANOTHER ANGLE ON CHRIS AND HUNTER

HUNTER

Why do you think no one stopped you in your campaign, Mr. Stopa? Do you think you were beyond our reach?

(beat)

You have wealth, true, but any one of us here has a thousand times your wealth. Any one of us could have stopped you...even killed you, had we so desired.

(beat)

But why should we? With your money you did our work for us.

224 LONG SHOT FROM EMPTY CHAIR TO CHRIS

as he pushes off from the wall and comes around the table slowly. He pulls out the deep, soft, evil chair and slides down into it. He puts his feet up on the table.

HUNTER

Very good, Mr. Stopa. That is genuinely excellent. You know that chair is for you, don't you.

(beat)

And if you were afraid that your soul could be bought, you'd be afraid to sit in it.

(beat)

But you aren't, and it can't, and you sit. So. You live up to our highest expectations.

Chris smiles, but says nothing. He watches them and they watch him. There is a SOUND from an alcove behind Hunter. He starts at the sound, then nods.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

Oh, don't think we aren't trying to buy your soul, Mr. Stopa. It is a very useful soul indeed. And just to show you that we make only the most handsome of contracts, I'd like you to meet my daughter...

A woman steps partially out of the black shadows of the alcove. She

stops so we and Chris can see only a very shapely outline.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

Oh, come, my dear. Not shy now, are you? Mr. Stopa, my daughter and my ex-mistress...

She steps out. It is THE ZERO GIRL. Chris is not surprised. He watches her coolly as she comes around the table, swaying, panther-lithe, all sensuality. She comes to him and leans down and takes his head in her hands and kisses him deeply, lingeringly on the mouth. It is a soul kiss, deep and obviously intended to reach him on a sub-molecular level. Chris returns the kiss with expertise and a hand thrown up against the back of her head, but when she is done he turns back almost casually, as though he had performed his stud number and now could get on to other business.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

I'll really be quite sorry to lose Eve, Mr. Stopa. My daughter is rather extraordinary in bed, and for a man of my age that is something of a treasure. Ah, but...

(beat)

She seems rather taken with you.

Eve steps back, eyes still fastened on Chris. She stays there against the wall, not moving.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

You don't seem surprised that my little Eve was always a key to unlock your situation...from the very beginning.

(beat)

Ah! But then, why should you be...you're a bright addition to our cabal, Mr. Stopa.

He leans forward, as far as his enormous bulk allows. He steeples his fingers and smiles with eldritch evil.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

From the beginning we knew you would come to us. It had to be. You put your faith in people, Mr. Stopa. Sad, isn't it. Sad, sad, oh so sad. To learn they are all alike, they are just like us...and like you.

(beat)

And the moment they find themselves safe or happy or well-fed, they turn into us. Let them get just some little thing they don't want to lose and all their noble instincts, all their altruism, all their charming humanitarianism—it becomes concern for, ah, “number one.”

(beat)

Isn't it amusing, Mr. Stopa; isn't it inevitable? Not only is there no way out, they wouldn't take it if there was. They become the them they hated when they had nothing.

Chris smiles. A big smile. A triumphant smile. He climbs up out of the chair and starts toward the door. Eve moves toward him and without taking his eyes off Hunter, Chris stops her with a hand. He continues toward the door.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

Yes, of course. Of course you must try. We expect it.

(beat)

Take care, Mr. Stopa.

Chris walks to the door, opens it.

HUNTER (CONT'D.)

Remember, however: there is only one important secret:

(beat)

THE OLD ORDER DYETH—GIVING WAY TO THE OLD ORDER.

Chris looks back with a faintly smug expression and walks out, closing the door softly behind him. CAMERA PANS BACK to Hunter and the others. Mr. THROAT speaks in a ratcheting voice like a man who has had a laryngectomy. From the bowels of the earth.

MR. THROAT

I'd like some nice strawberries.

CUT TO:

225 INT. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER—ON CHRIS—DAY

The room is filled with the computer we saw at the very outset of the film. Computer communications devices from floor to ceiling, covering all four walls and the ceiling and floor. Chris stands alone in the room, speaking to the machines.

CHRIS

Listen. Now I know. I've got to tell my people. I want you to get the word out. Yankee Stadium, have them all come to Yankee Stadium. And buy me time on all three TV networks, and radio, and NET, too. All at the same time. Take ads and buy announcement time...I want them all there...so I can tell them...

The SOUND OF COMPUTERS rises, chittering, as they begin the work of setting up a mass meeting. The SOUND GOES UP and dominates, and CAMERA MOVES PAST CHRIS to focus on the multifacets of the computer faces, which then SOLARIZE IN CHIAROSCURO the Mondrian-like dot-images of the machinery digits as they

SLOWLY CHANGE TO:

226 YANKEE STADIUM—HIGH CROWD SHOT (STOCK)

the computer squares that have bled out into black and white and chiaroscuro have changed to the shapes of thousands of people densely packed into a crowd. And the SOUND OF COMPUTERS has gradually changed to the NOISE OF A MASSIVE CROWD and the visual/auditory change is effected simultaneously and at the same rate.

. 227 CROWD SHOTS (STOCK)

thru

229

showing us the Stadium is packed to the walls. Even the outfield bleachers are jammed. Many TV cameras are focused on the pitcher's mound.

230 ANGLE

Chris stands on the pitcher's mound. There are microphones in front of him.

231 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

232 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE EAGLE DOORKNOB

233 ON CHRIS

as he raises his hands for the crowd to quiet down.

234 PANNING SHOT—ACROSS VAST CROWDS (STOCK)

as they quickly fall into silence. Everyone strains forward to hear what he has to say.

235 ON CHRIS

as he speaks with deep passion and conviction.

CHRIS

“Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe...

He pauses, and DEAFENING APPLAUSE COMES FROM THE CROWD. It goes on for a moment, then quiets again.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

All mimsy were the borogoves and the mome raths outgrabe.

Again, a repeat of the above. They love it!

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation...

Repeat, again. Then silence.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

The Establishment bibble bibble they crush us beneath their booted feet bibble bibble bibble...

Louder applause. A tumult.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

I've discovered them. The ones who control us, who wage wars, who keep you uninformed, who rule the world...he cabal!

The applause is deafening. But it is laced with a hard undercurrent of revolutionary zeal, with suppressed violence. Then they go to quiet more slowly.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are bibble bibble and bibble...

Applause. Silence.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

But I know how we can defeat them.

(beat)

Because, you see, when we get what we want, when we get money and cars and we get fat and complacent, we become them...

No applause. Chris looks startled. Silence.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

Young people grow up to be just like the old people they hate. We're all guilty!

No applause. Chris looks worried. Silence.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

The only way we can beat them, the only way we can change the world and make it a decent place to live is to give up what we have!

A soft rumble in the crowd. The sound of lava bubbling just beneath the surface.

CHRIS (CONT'D.)

We have to give up our money and all our comforts! We have to cut back to basics, live like we cared about each other...we have to stop being them!

Chris stands silent. Now the rumbling grows higher, gets louder. A pop bottle is thrown onto the field. Then another. Then a seat cushion. Then seats. Then an old 1910 kitchen stove. Then a 1941 Plymouth comes crashing down out of the stands. Great pieces of metal and rock. Huge boulders. Something hits Chris, lays open his forehead.

236 THE CROWD (STOCK—NEW AND OLD FILM)

NO CLOSEUPS! ONLY A MASS! Like army ants they suddenly swarm out of the stands. Hundreds, thousands, all of them rushing toward Chris with fists upraised, with swords in their hands, maces, battle-axes, tridents, pitchforks, clubs, morningstars, scimitars, cleavers, butcher knives.

237 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE CABAL

238 SUBLIMINAL FLASH—THE EAGLE DOORKNOB

. 239 SEQUENCE OF FLASH SHOTS

thru

245

INTERCUT WITH THE MOB STORMING CHRIS:

WILD DOGS TEARING AT A CARCASS
ARMY ANTS OVERRUNNING A JUNGLE

CATTLE STAMPEDING

THE CABAL IN THEIR CHAIRS

THE SCREAMING EAGLE DOORKNOB (with the shriek of a mad bird
in SOUND OVER)

246 HIGH SHOT

of Chris in the middle, as the crowd pours in on him. A crowd of maddened people. Chris is buried under the throng. The screams and shrieks are SOUNDS OF DYING MEN ON A BATTLEFIELD.

CUT TO:

247 THE STADIUM

empty of people. Darker now. Very eerie. The infield is a mass of trampled mud. There are dead people lying there. It might be a scene from the Peloponnesian Wars. Men with spears through their chests, women crumpled up, crushed skulls, armless bodies. A scene out of Dante. CAMERA PULLS BACK AND UP AND UP AND UP and continues pulling up and back, as we:

SLOW LAP-DISSOLVE TO:

248 LONG SHOT—GREENSWARD—DAY

MOVING SHOT going up a gentle sloping greensward. The grass is very, very green, the day is very, very bright. Gentle MUSIC IN E.G. (almost happy-ending music). We are moving with the POV of a man, and from time to time we see his feet at the bottom of the frame as he walks up the slope. We HEAR him WHISTLING something jaunty. We should not see anything but grass. Until the feet approach a driveway cutting in front of us. Then the CAMERA TILTS UP SLOWLY to show

us it is the strange old massive mansion of Hunter and the Cabal. And then we see the legs of the man walking up to the house. They are encased in bell-bottoms. It is Chris. But we must not see his face. The full figure rises into the frame (from the rear, viewed) and we can tell it is Chris by the way he walks, by the clothes, by the size and shape, by everything but a look at the face.

Then...

CAMERA ZOOMS BACK TO MED. LONG SHOT

looking up that green, green long lawn, as the man comes toward the door. It opens before he can knock, and Mr. Hunter stands there, immense in the doorway. The young man walks up to him and very gently Mr. Hunter puts his arm around him and draws him inside. The door closes. HOLD FOR SEVERAL BEATS. Then:

CAMERA ZOOMS IN CLOSE ON:

249 FRONT DOOR

on the screaming eagle door-knocker we have not noticed before. HOLD FOR SEVERAL BEATS. Then...

CAMERA ZOOMS BACK OUT:

250 GREENSWARD

as darkness begins to close in from the edges of the frame. The darkness laps at the screen, drawing in toward that one bright sun-glowing spot of gold on the door. Tighter and tighter and tighter till we see only that smudge of light in the center and then:

A CHORUS IN A CATHEDRAL SINGS "HALLLLLLL-AY-LOO-YUHHHH!" and the light goes out with a snap, and we:

FADE TO BLACK and FADE OUT.

Interim Memo

We depart from our scheduled format to offer this afterthought pursuant to the preceding dramatic-comedic foray. But only because I promised, and you *know* how you get!

The scene I'd always wanted to write, that Marvin told me to put into the script, was (of course) the picnic in the city dump, a love scene *avec* rodents. Always thought that would've made a super date. I suggest this sort of creative romancing is a salutary tonic to all the dopey books by gentlemen with goiters and ladies with too much eye makeup that tell you how to spice up your moribund marriage by dressing up as Queen Zenobia of the Martian Amazons and her drooling love-slave Gorgo.

Now stop *nuhdzing* me.

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